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OR

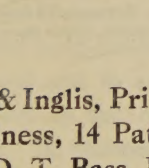
THE WORLD TO COME, AND THE DIVINE PREPARATION FOR IT.

BY

WILLIAM LINCOLN

OF BERESFORD CHAPEL, LONDON,

Author of "Lectures on the Revelation," "The Epistles of John,' &c., &c.



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PREFACE.

THE endeavour, in the following pages, is mainly to draw out the teaching of this book viewed *as a whole.* No doubt each of its many chapters abounds in instruction; and inasmuch as it narrates the history of the early patriarchs, one cannot but linger over the lessons suggested by each inspired sketch successively presented to us, and even by the various incidents of each several life selected by the Spirit for our study. And this, as it is the usual method of reading this book, so it is a very profitable one. Nevertheless, since each book of God's Word is one only of God's own divisions or chapters, so it is surely well for us clearly to ascertain what He would have us learn, from one such division or book of His, regarded in its entirety.

For instance, there may be a parallel designed by Him, and therefore to be reverently instituted by us between the account of God's work in the Creation and the Lord's ways with the seven representative men of this book. Thus as in Chapter I., so, too, in the body of the book, the marked twofoldedness of the realms of God—to wit, in heaven and in earth—is seen in the different call of Enoch on the one hand, from that of Noah on the other. So likewise, also in Chapter I., the call of God produces Light on the very first day.

Yet the distinction is evident of this light from the Sun itself, whose beams of glory shone out unhindered not until the fourth day. 2 Cor. iii. 18 with iv. 6. For as the Spirit was, in a certain sense, in the world even before the man Christ Jesus was raised up and seated upon God's throne, yet is that Spirit fully now poured out from the Son glorified; so in the narrative, after the picture of Abraham the believer, we are instructed as to His way with Isaac the son. For it is *because* we are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts. Or, once more, there is alike at the close of this book, as well as at the end of the account of the Creation, the Rule over all in the hands of a man. These are fainter specimens in the first chapter, of what we find to be much more distinctly foreshadowed in the course of the entire panorama of the other forty-nine chapters. They serve to premonish us that the book of Genesis should be primarily regarded as connected in its lessons from end to end.

It would seem as if the main lessons of the book are two: one is, how the Rule erst entrusted to man, but lost through sin, shall yet again, in an enlarged and universal form, be seen in Human hands. For contrast the type of Joseph with that of Adam. And secondly, we learn how God's own people shall be blessed in that coming Lord, some in the heavenlies, and some in the earthlies, and in divers concentric circles of glory, as displayed in His ways of grace with Enoch and Noah; and in his disciplinary dealings and training of Abraham, and Isaac and Jacob.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS 1

THE LORD'S WAY WITH ADAM, THE TYPE OF HIM THAT IS TO COME 3

THE LORD'S WAY WITH ENOCH, THE SAINT FOR HEAVEN . 14

THE LORD'S WAY WITH NOAH, THE SAINT FOR THE EARTH

SECTION I. Noah, previous to the Deluge . . 21

SECTION II. Noah, subsequent to the Deluge . 34

THE LORD'S WAY WITH ABRAHAM, THE BELIEVER

SECTION I. His call to Canaan. His blessing by Melchisedek, after the slaughter of the kings 44

SECTION II. The training of the believer for the inheritance 54

SECTION III. The Lord's way with believing Abraham, as a father 79

THE LORD'S WAY WITH ISAAC, THE TYPICAL SON . 95

THE LORD'S WAY WITH JACOB, THE TYPICAL SERVANT

SECTION I. His absence from home, whilst engaged in earning his two brides and his flock . . 106

SECTION II. His progress homeward to Bethel, and guiding the family and flock thither . . 124

PAGE

THE LORD'S WAY WITH JOSEPH, THE TYPICAL RULER

SECTION I. Edom in power; whilst the family of this coming Ruler are strangers in Canaan . 141

SECTION II. He who is to rule typically according to God, must first learn to obey. The descent after the flesh, of the true king . 147

SECTION III. Since all is light in the presence of God, so there is His judgment seen by him who, for obedience, is in the depths of this world's rejection and degradation . . 158

SECTION IV. The Appointment of the Ruler . . 168

SECTION V. Joseph, the Ruler's behaviour towards his brethren 173

SECTION VI. Joseph the Ruler's service to Pharaoh, in the full subjugation of all to his authority and in blessing to the whole land . 193

SECTION VII. The Closing years of Jacob and of Joseph 195

CONCLUSION 205

TYPICAL FORESHADOWINGS

IN

THE BOOK OF GENESIS.

Introductory Remarks.

IT had been well if the first verse, and beginning of the second, had been separated from the after verses, and entitled chapter i. and thus seen to be distinct from the narrative of God's constituting the earth as a suitable abode for His creature man. The second verse says that the earth, ere God began again to work upon it, was "*tohu*," rendered "without form." But Isa. xlv. 18, asserts that God did not create it "*tohu*." And in Isa. xxxiv. 11, the same two words occur precisely as we have here, "*tohu*," "*bohu*"—"confusion and emptiness" as they are translated there. Compare also Jer. iv. 23, and Rev. xvi. 18. From these four passages we are, perhaps, led to infer that judgment had swept over this planet ere man had aught to do with it. Curiosity would here invite us to enter the realms of conjecture, encouraged by the wise and foolish guesses of geology.

But let us from this singular opening of the book learn one most valuable lesson, that the silence of Scripture is itself instructive. Let us therefore refuse to be

wise beyond what is written. If it had pleased God that at present we should know more certainly of the early stages through which the earth has passed, He would have told us more. But since He has not, let us bow our heads and confess our ignorance.

It has been said that the Bible is the history of man. Were this the fact, then it would inevitably follow that the proper study of mankind is man. But this is an atheistic sentiment. Better far to say that this Book traces the pathway of God through the narrow isthmus of time, and that it reveals His ways and His doings towards His frail, and sinful, and erring subject, man.

Now in the course of the fifty chapters of which this book is composed, seven men, each one of them a representative man, specially pass before our eyes. The account of The Lord's dealings with these seven men constitutes the substance of this book. These seven of course are, as is well known, Adam, Enoch, and Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. Many other personages here appear. Still in relation to one or another of these all may be grouped. Therefore we may divide our remarks on this book by ranging what we are told under one or another of these seven, and of God's action towards each of them.

Upon this most instructive Book of Genesis—the Book of the germs or seeds of everything—writers have been wont to direct their attention principally to the first half thereof. This surely is a mistake and a defect. For the main subject of this book is progressively and regularly developed, even as the work in creation is gradually unfolded in Chapter I. And accordingly, in the following addresses, care has been taken to trace this development, evidently designed, as well and as much from Chapter XXV. to the end, as from Chapter I. to Chapter XXV.

The Lord's Way with Adam, the type of Him that is to come.

Genesis i.—iii.

AT the outset it is advisable that we should state that the variation in the Name divine found in these chapters is perfectly intentional. Fools may laugh and cite this admitted variation as a proof that Moses was a mere compiler, putting his narrative together from various shreds of tradition extant in his day. We know better. We know that this is the Word of God. True, that in chapter i. this name is Elohim, or God; that in chapters ii.* and iii. it is Jehovah-Elohim; whilst in chapter iv. it is Jehovah. This change of term to an intelligent reader of Scripture ought to be at once some clue to the history itself. For Elohim is His name as Creator; Jehovah-Elohim is the revelation of that Creator in relationship with His creature; whilst His name Jehovah reveals Him still, indeed, in relationship, but no longer on the ground of mere creation. Surely we may exclaim, "How beautifully exact is all this!"

CHAPTER I. shows us God preparing a home, replete with every comfort and blessing for His creature; and

* The word translated "generations," in chap. ii. 4, is ever prospective, and never retrospective, as see chaps. vi. 9 and xi. 17.

then, secondly, His formation of that creature, and His placing him in the home prepared for him. Even for the very cattle the earth was suitably adapted, ere those cattle were called into existence. It would be quite foreign to the subject assigned me, and to the limits within which it must be contained, to enlarge upon every verse. All that is proposed is to present a general survey of the entire book of Genesis as a whole. Let it therefore be perfectly understood that I refrain myself from remarking upon many expressions on which one might easily dilate. Suffice it to say that the six days' work is subdivided into two threes, in which the light, the waters, and the earth, are severally addressed twice.

At length, since it is ever His wont to keep the best till the last, and to reveal His deepest purposes at the close, He forms man. There is here to be observed a consultation held about the making of man, such as there had not been of any other creature. And if it is asked, "With whom took He counsel?" a full answer is furnished us in Prov. viii. about Wisdom, who is the Word ere He had come forth; or, again, in John i., about the Word, who is Wisdom after He had come forth from God. Also compare Gen. i. 2 and Job xxxiii. 4. And this very distinction, great and important as it evidently is, proves the difference to be vast indeed between man on the one hand, and all other animals on the other. To this add, that man was made in the image and likeness of God, and that, in chap. ii., we are told that the breath of Jehovah-Elohim was breathed into him. Then we can see the folly of those who would degrade man to the level of a brute, or maintain that his existence did not differ fundamentally from the existence of the brute. Were there

no such difference, what would have become of the breath of God?

I only add here, that in verse 28 Eve is seen to be blessed in Adam ere she actually existed. This is a most exquisite picture when viewed typically. Again, even after his creation, and his being placed in Paradise, Adam was not entitled to anything that he beheld. Nothing was his until God had said to him, "Behold, I have given you," etc. Once more, remark that the first three verses of chapter ii. may be conjoined here.* Then you hear of God at rest as to His creation work, until the sin of His creature disturbed that rest, and led Him to commence to work again, that He might rest in redemption-rest, which rest none shall ever be able to disturb, because it does not depend on any goodness of the creature, as did that former rest (chap. i. 31). It depends altogether on the finished work of the Son of God upon the cross. Here, for the first time, we encounter that precious word "finished," a word which ever and anon crops up as the great work of God's Son looms more and more into view. So of His Tabernacle in Exod. xl., and of His Temple in 2 Chron. vii. 11, this language is used, as well as by Christ in His address to His Father in John xvii.; as also when about to deliver His Spirit up to His Father (John xix.). And presently, when all is fulfilled of that which He has spoken to us in His Word, He will once more sound this triumphant note (Rev. xxi.).

Chapter II. brings before us three things—(1) Man's relationship to God, with the duty incumbent on him of obeying implicitly that God in everything; (2) Also woman's relationship to man; and (3) the other crea-

* The word "thus," in chap. ii. 1, is more exactly rendered "and."

tures' relationship to man and woman. Thus throughout God's work there is seen to be due subordination of one above another; also of God being over all, and of man in authority, His representative on earth. But man failing to recognize God as his superior, the sceptre fell from his hands, and chaos and sin, both in the world without and within, is the consequence. Instead of the spirit ruling the soul, and the soul the body, the flesh sways the soul; and the spirit of man, whereby he may commune with God, is set aside, is dead. But Christ, the Second Man, the Lord from Heaven, will yet in His time show on earth what beautiful rule is (1 Tim. vi. 13). Only Christ's authority as Man shall extend throughout the entire universe. For study how Psalm viii. is expanded in a manner far beyond what the Psalmist ever dreamt of in its application to Him by the Holy Ghost, in Heb. ii. 8, 1 Cor. xv. 25, and Eph. i. 22. Then shall be seen the heavens opened, and the angels of God ascending as well as descending unto the Son of Man. This is that reign of the Man of whom we read in Dan. vii. And in all this glory Christ will still act as the willing servant of God His Father.

The action of God, in bringing the animals to be named by Adam, was designed to signify the delegated ownership and authority over them entrusted to Adam (compare Isa. xliii. 1). But there was also another and profounder object effected likewise thereby; for thus was Adam made to feel his loneliness. So after Adam, created early on the sixth day, had been occupied in naming the animals brought to him throughout the day, then God caused a deep sleep to fall upon him. And during that night a rib was taken from his side, and "builded" (so Hebrew) into a woman. And thus was a helpmeet found for him. Likewise, whilst as to this

world Christ appears to sleep, God is intent on building the Church, taken from Christ's body. A rib is taken from his side, as if a cedar-plank had been taken from the Temple, and formed into a splendid vessel for its service. For we are members of His body—out of His flesh, and out of His bones.

The falling asleep of Adam, and then awaking, and finding his Eve, resemble the two Advents of the Lord, and prove that only from a *slain* and (as faith knows) a *risen* Christ can the Church be formed. And though she was "builded" in the silence of the night, yet in the morning did she appear in maturity, and in resurrection beauty. And Adam gladly recognized her. His words, "This is now," etc., are equivalent to "She will do." He saw the glad results of his sleep, and he was satisfied. He was not ashamed of her, nor Christ of us. But in all this the leading thought is evidently not of Eve, but of Adam. She was necessary to him, as we in resurrection (1 Cor. xv.) are the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. "The woman is for the man" (1 Cor. xi. 9). God is preparing "a marriage for *His Son*" (Matt. xxii.). God's consent to this marriage was seen in bringing Eve, and Eve's in coming to Adam. But in the divine reality His bride is not only taken out of Him, but is presented by Himself to Himself. That is to say, Christ is not only the One from Whom she is taken, and by Whom, as she comes into existence, she is nourished and cherished, but also He is the God Who makes the presentation, as well as the Man to Whom the presentation is made.

I am aware that some deny much of this. I am also assured how futile their objection is. But, alas! more and more of truth is assailed every year. Am I told that there is only one Scripture which seems to prove that the

Church is Christ's heavenly Bride, and that even it, when examined does not assert this? My reply is, it has ever been the custom, in all the centuries of this dispensation, of those inclined to fritter away and to surrender the truth of God, to attempt to weaken the force of any part of this truth, by maintaining that only such and such Scriptures appear to support it. The more vehement those men are against any truth, the fewer Scriptures will they admit to bear upon it. Thus, for instance, acts the Unitarian with regard to the divinity of Christ. Such will tell you that only John i. and Phil. ii. contain any semblance of proof thereof. How many more could simple Christians quote than these! And I am clear that several other Scriptures, besides Eph. v., teach the bridal relationship of the Church to Christ, and that other Scriptures again assume it as a fact. But even if there was only the one in Eph. v., this ought to be ample; and would be, to one who had no pretty novelty to support. Though the term Bride is not found in that passage, yet the sentiment is, very abundantly. It is possible to be caught by a word, so as to overlook the whole train of thought. Here the train of thought is denied, for the lack of that single word. Dare any one deny that the allusion throughout Eph. v. 23—32 is to the taking of Eve out of Adam's body, in order to the building of a suitable bride for Adam thereupon? Will you maintain that the sentiment designed to be conveyed is of the Church being the Body, and not of the Church being the Bride of the Lamb? As well might any one dream of a man formally presenting his own body to himself! But the explanation at the close, by the inspired writer himself, ought to set aside all such notions. For he says, "I speak concerning Christ AND the Church." Now, were the leading thought in this Scrip-

ture, of the Bride as Christ's Body, what would be the force of the word "AND?" It is utterly superfluous; in fact, in another Scripture, where the same writer does speak of Christ with His Church, as one Body, his language is remarkably varied. Then his words are, "So also is the Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 12). Here, you observe, there is no "AND" added. For the two are assumed as one. But in Ephesians there is this "AND," for the one is assumed to be two. I mean, in the one Scripture (1 Cor. xii.), it is taught that the twain are one; and in the other (Eph. v.), that the one is twain. The fact is, these two connected truths were designed to be counter truths. For the one reveals rather the grandeur of the Church's position; the other, her subordination and His affection. The one places her on the throne with Christ; the other witnesses her as the leading, and yet the humblest, worshipper at His feet. Take away either truth, and you mar much the effect of the whole. How can you gladly bend before Him, if you only see your oneness with Him? How can you appreciate your calling, your position, if only at His feet you are prostrate? Revelation v. pictures to us the Church in both her proper attitudes. Never there is she seen standing; at one time she is sitting by Him, at another worshipping before Him. As some old writer has quaintly said, "Eve was taken not from the head of Adam, that she might demean herself as lord; nor yet from his feet, as if she was to be trampled under foot; but from his side, that she might be his fit companion, and that his affection might be set upon her."

But now the perfect way of the heavenly Bridegroom towards the Bride is set forth succinctly and yet most fully in that said Scripture, where the scene here receives its inspired parallel and antitypical interpreta-

tion. Also, with great propriety this is traced out for us in the epistle to the Ephesians. For that is the one epistle which definitely treats of the corporate standing of the Church as in the heavenlies. And the notable passage there in Ephesians v. appears to be a designed climax of the entire teaching of that grand epistle. It is found here, indeed, in the midst of an exhortation to husbands to love their wives. But this apparently incidental way of its introduction is quite in the style of new testament Scripture as regards very many most important truths. And here we note seven things predicated of the Lord as to His behaviour towards His Bride. *First*, He loved her. Thus all His subsequent action is traced up to and interpreted in the light of its blessed source. For next to His love of the Father, comes His love of the Church as His motive-power in doing and suffering all for her that He has done. He beheld that Church in the glass of God's decree, and His soul was enraptured with that sight. Hence, *secondly*, He gave Himself for her. And love beyond this is clearly impossible even for Him. Who ever heard of a love like this? And His love is still the same! He is risen, He is glorified. But unchanged, persisting in His love He is engaged in its display though now in other aspects. Having purchased her for Himself, He is intent on rendering her such an one as He desires her to be, as His eternal companion and the object of His love. No other bridegroom can render the bride of his choice what he would like. But this is precisely how the Lord is at present occupied with the Church. And this is enlarged upon in the next four particulars. For, *thirdly*, He sanctifies her unto the light and purity to which she has been called. *Fourthly*, He cleanses her from all iniquity, by the continually repeated

application through the Spirit, of the water of the word of God. And these two—the sanctification and the cleansing—must ever be combined. A heavenly mind without simple, hearty obedience is of little value. Hence as water acts on the body, so the word is to act on the motives, thoughts, life, and walk by the energy of the Holy Ghost. But if these two involve sorrow whilst the work is only in process; so, *fifthly* and *sixthly*, the other corresponding two, to wit, the "nourishing" and the "cherishing" furnish heavenly support and comfort. In the Lord's untiring attention to her sustentation and growth is the cause traced of every atom of spiritual strength she receives from the doctrines, the promises, and the truths of Scripture. And in His "cherishing" of her, and administration of warmth to her, is indicated from Whom comes all increasing spiritual apprehension and joy in God and in His love. And thus in process of time does she corporately, and the several members thereof individually, as they come into being during the night of this dispensation, grow in grace and in the distinct perception of whose hand is at work upon her, and of what He is doing with her. And, as morning neared, Eve would become quite conscious of her own actual existence; so the Church, after ages of slumber, is at last awaking up to the grandeur and the bliss of her calling, and to the imminence of her presentation in person to her divine Bridegroom.

This, of course, is the ultimate issue of this amazing and long-continued process in His work upon us now. And accordingly the words in verse 27 should be thus rendered:—"that He Himself might present her to Himself, the CHURCH, glorious, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Compare Jude 24. And when the Bridegroom and Bride at length meet, each,

we know, will be mutually "satisfied" with the other. Isaiah liii. 11; Psalm xvii. 15. And the first to gaze at ease and in full upon the unveiled glory and beauty of incarnate Deity will be the Church of God. "We *shall* see *Him as He* is" (1 John iii.)

And thus as the temple of God, this Church will have God dwelling *in* her; and as His Body, will have God *above* her; so as His Bride she will have Him *with* her. For as the Temple, God, even the *Father,* will fill it and every living stone thereof with Himself; and as the Bride, she is *Christ's;* so as the Body she is filled with the *Holy Ghost* from her divine Head. And whilst these three *combined,* perfectly set forth her eternal relationship towards the three-one God; her name as the City, the New Jerusalem, sets forth her relationship to the universe below her.

In my Lectures on the book of Revelation I have already remarked on the two Trees of the knowledge and of the life, now combined in Christ, and on the River representing the Holy Ghost. For life from Him is undivided in the garden whilst man is unfallen; but outside thereof to man fallen it has four forms, as in the four Gospels, or as in the four cherubim.

Chapter III. Obedience that may not be tested is no obedience at all. Here the question is simply one of God's authority, and of man's ready subjection to Him. The test was a perfect one. Had God made it to be in some question of moral evil, such would not have so distinctly asserted the authority of God. But here the partaking of the fruit was only evil, because God had forbidden it. There was no *reason* why the fruit should not be eaten, other than the plain command of God. Many now likewise judge of obedience after the flesh

likewise. They can see some reason why they should live honestly; but such commands as relate to Baptism or to the Supper of the Lord, for instance, are stigmatized as unnecessary. There is no real perception of God, and of His will being supreme, in such cases.

Then Adam, having disobeyed God, the Lord begins to unfold the resources of grace. Satan is here termed "the serpent;" for the way of God is first to overcome him, and *then* to expose him. And mention having been made by God of the two seeds, and of their antagonism, and of the results to each of that antagonism, Adam so drinks in the truth conveyed in God's announcement, that he calls his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living. He apprehended that he was to live, as well as to die; but he also saw that this new life was to come through the woman and her seed, and not from himself. It is a truth to which all nature now bears witness, that "in the midst of life we are in death;' but it is a truth which only God can reveal, and faith can grasp, that in the midst of death we are in life. His very raiment (for innocence was lost for ever) would, in type, suffice to signify as well how his sin could be covered, as how life and holiness could be obtained. Meanwhile, better that the old Adam should die, than that it should be perpetuated. It would appear to be suggested as if access to the tree of life was even then, as it is now, by means of the tree of knowledge. For this is life eternal, to know God and Jesus Christ.

The Lord's Way with Enoch, the saint for Heaven.

Genesis iv. and v.

CHAPTER IV. Here at once we see the amazing difference between the two seeds—the holy one hated and murdered, and the wicked his murderer. We are all aware that the fullest display of this hostility of the wicked towards the righteous and the holy is beheld in the Cross of the Son of God, and again in the rejection of the Holy Ghost by the world now. For through that blessed Spirit Christ is formed in us; and as the new life is developed in us, so it is opposed still and rejected (Rom. viii. 36).

Of the seed of Cain there are many on the list whose names are identical with or similar to the sons of God (professing) in the next chapter. Compare chap. iv. 17, 18, with those whose names we find in chap. v. It is the same still. The greatest haters of God in the world have, many of them, been those who once promised fair. But especially, as in chap. v., there seems a sort of climax reached in what is recorded of Enoch, and of his holy walk; so, conversely, here we have a hellish climax reached in what is recorded of the lust, and murder, and scornful infidelity of Lamech, the descendant of Cain. For the patience of God ripens the saint and the sinner both.

Chapter V. Here we have traced for us the line of the other seed. But whilst in chap. iv. Cain's seed are beheld busy, making this world their home, and as comfortable and as refined as, with skill in all arts, and the production of all sweet sounds, they can render it; albeit the blood of Abel, being left unavenged, was itself a witness of the curse resting on it: here, on the contrary, in chap. v., we have, indeed, the other seed mentioned, though without any record of their doings. Notwithstanding that their lifetime extended over several centuries, little is told us of them beyond that they lived, begat a family, and died. Surely this very silence is most telling. Nowadays, with the world's heroes, three volumes are required for the narrative of one who lived till seventy years; here three verses suffice for the account of one who lived seven or nine hundred! As if Cain's descendants made up all the world's history! But as to this other seed, it is implied that earth was not their home. The patriarchal funeral bell, "And he died," "And he died," tolls eight times in this brief chapter. None of them reach quite up to a thousand years. For this we find is reserved for man on earth in millennial times. And hence we see that, even from the beginning, God had the end in view. Moreover, as we read that Lamech lived after he begat Noah five hundred ninety and five years, whilst the flood was upon the earth in the six hundredth year of Noah's life, therefore Lamech lived within five years of that flood. Further, since we read that Methuselah lived after he begat Lamech seven hundred eighty and two years, whilst Lamech begat Noah when he was a hundred eighty and two years old, and therefore when Lamech had six hundred years more to live, it follows that Methuselah died in the very year that the flood took

place. How very nigh Scripture goes towards contradicting itself, and yet without its actually doing this! Surely nothing but the truth, revealed by the Spirit of God, preserved the inspired writer here from inaccuracy of statement.

Above I have remarked that the patriarchal funeral bell is heard to toll eight times in this chapter, and that all of these, from Adam to Lamech, eventually passed away hence. But there is one bright exception made in the mode in which this was done. Enoch is taken to heaven ere the deluge came; although whilst he prophesied of the Lord's advent, he may have eyed the deluge impending as the precursor of a still more awful judgment now so near (Jude 14 and 15). On the other hand, Noah passes quite through the deluge. Thus these two men, of each of whom it is recorded that he walked with God—as if it were one on each arm—these become a designed type of God's two callings: of the one now being made, which is the heavenly calling, and to be closed by the rapture of the entire Church into the immediate presence of her Lord; the other, God's earthly call in the future of a remnant of Israel, and of a multitude that no man can number out of all nations,* who will be kept for the appearing of Christ safely through the great tribulation presently to set in. Now this walking with God, of which here we read recorded of Enoch, denotes on God's part, complacency, and on Enoch's part, ease and peace. Likewise in Ephesians, clear directions are afforded to us as to the heavenly character of our present walk, in view of the sure prospect of soon being called up on high.

* In my Lecture on Rev. vii. I have proved the amazing difference of the two classes of Jew and Gentile there from the Church of God.

Here, then, is our Hope set before us in figure. Like Enoch, we are to disappear from this world's scene. We may be somewhat missed, but should be less desired. Like our Master, for all our service in it we reap only its hate and its contempt. It will be known that we have gone, and where, for the Beast will, when he has risen to power, turn into scorn the whole thing (Rev. xiii. 6); also many professors will, when it is too late, implore the Lord to open unto them (Luke xiii. 25). The living saints, those here at any period ere He returns, are they who are constantly represented in Scripture as those who may be caught away. For the Lord Jesus will descend from heaven with a shout of triumph and of joy. The Holy Ghost, who is only down here for a season, and in consequence of Christ's supreme exaltation there, in order that He may whisper to those with listening ears of all that hidden glory of the Lord, will at once lift the entire Church into the divine presence. His own know His voice now, and will recognize His signal then. They are drawn close together by His wondrous story of the love of the uncreated Son of God, and in their gathering themselves together closely around Himself, are being thus formed into a Body and a Bride, and are at last gathered home unto Himself present still in their midst, as when down yonder in the world. Then they believed in His presence, and tasted somewhat of its sweetness; now He is visible before their very eyes—He Who for them hung in agony on the Cross. He has thus come on the road to meet us because He loves us so much, and because on us His heart is set. His prayer had proved the reality of His love; His Cross had gauged its depth. He did not come for Enoch; nor does He come when a believer dies. Then that saint departed to be with Him. But He

comes for the Church—for us altogether, those whose bodies were held in the tomb, and for those who were like caged doves in those bodies of humiliation when He came. It is the will of God that all of us shall be glorified together; and until that time has arrived, we are sealed as God's own, and have the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts. We are not of the world any more than, nay, not so much as, were those patriarchs mentioned in this chapter; for not only are we called with a heavenly calling, but more, we are the Church of the living God. We have perfect peace now through His finished work; we see Him representing us before our God, and we have this Holy Spirit already with us. In all these things our blessing very far exceeds that of these early saints.

As to times and seasons, we know nothing, nor indeed do we wish to know. It is designed as a proof of His confiding love to us, that He has not made us acquainted with the time of His arrival. No loving wife would like the implication that she could not be trusted to be ready, with the hand on the latch, for her husband at any time. Besides which, this keeps us on the look-out from day to day, which pleases Him very much. This He tells us over and over again, as in Luke xii. 37. But though the time be hidden, still surely we must be conscious that the end of the Church's course here has been nearly reached. And what a view this opens to us! At any moment, the very next for aught we know, and we may be gone, at once and right up into His immediate presence; God Himself, the very next moment, engaged in the act of presenting us faultless before Him with exceeding joy. Here we may be at one moment in our daily avocations, and, or ever we are aware all this work of God's fully accomplished.

True, much has to be done down here before the Lord can appear to the world. So the world ripened further for judgment after Enoch was taken home, until the two parties of religious and irreligious, both unsaved, became amalgamated. The very word "I will destroy," was not heard, nor a single timber of the ark placed with one other, until a long period subsequent to Enoch's translation. But this is not so material to us. Our home is a heavenly one. We are not looking for the day, nor yet for the appearance of the Sun of Righteousness, but for the Morning Star, which shines for a while anterior to the day, and which those who are up betimes and watching, only see. Whilst the Old Testament is closed with a reference to the rising of the Sun of Righteousness, conversely the Lord Jesus, in the New, speaks of Himself as the Morning Star. This distinction of itself reveals the difference of our calling from Israel's. Yea more, whilst Malachi speaks of Israel treading the wicked under the soles of their feet, the Church, whose home is above the stars, is destined under its divine Archangel Michael to hurl Satan and his host from heaven (Rev. xii.) All this goes to show how in quite another sphere is our place and portion than on this earth. No, here we are pilgrims and strangers. And until we have left it, earth's ripening in wickedness, and next its judgment and blessing, are delayed. The Holy Ghost Himself, who is our heavenly guide and companion, hinders the development of the man of sin and the full display of man's apostacy (2 Thess. ii.) Satan needs not twenty centuries to produce this coming man. But he has to wait till God's purposes concerning us, and our calling, and our training, and our chastening here below are all completed.

It is not said here that Enoch *ascended* into Heaven, nor do we find anywhere else that our rapture is so

termed. This is only fully true of Christ's own path to His pristine home, denoting as it does majesty and stateliness in the mode of His departure. Enoch was "taken." "We are to be caught up," or rapt away by the Spirit as Philip was, only in our case to our home and to our God and Father and to the Lord Jesus. Some object to the word "rapture," but it is the very word used in the Greek to describe this thing. For rapture is properly a Latin word formed by metathesis from this word here. Thus we only keep close to Scripture in so speaking.

The Lord's Way with Noah, the saint for the earth.

Section I.

Noah, previous to the Deluge.

Genesis vi.— viii. 19.

CHAPTER VI., to Ver. 13. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. It does not follow because one is a saint that his children are also and all of them saints. Too well, alas! we know the contrary. These patriarchs, mentioned by name in chap. v., may have been, and probably were, all truly acquainted with God themselves; but each of them begat children, and there is no proof that their children all followed in their parents' faith.

It should be understood that at the beginning of the world's course, these two seeds, to wit, those of the openly wicked (in chap. iv.), and those of the sons of God, were not only separated as to the latter professing godliness, and as to the former scorning it; but there appears to have been a local distance maintained, for a while, between the two parties. The one hovered still on the outskirts of Eden, where were the Cherubim and the Shechinah; the other, even in Cain's own time, "went out," as the Scripture itself informs us, from the presence of the Lord. But in process of time, as the two parties multiplied, and the seed of Cain and the seed of Seth were each much increased, the advanced habita-

tions of the one would approximate to the nearest dwellings of the other. For it is not likely that Cain's seed went much further away than out of the view of Eden. And then the one line, the sons of God professing, beheld the daughters* of men that they were fair. Messengers,† or angels, would soon pass from the one party to the other, and enticed by the beauty of their women, abandon their own local nearness to Eden and to the Shechinah, and fix their dwelling-place among their new friends. The result is not left in doubt. Marriages of these who had formerly been in separation the one from the other prevailed at length, and to that extent, that amalgamation of the two seeds, the Sethite and the Cainite, followed. The one line thus proved that, however lineally descended from Seth, they were not spiritually his true seed.

But separation, as witness for God, abandoned, then came the deluge. After that, corruption and violence ‡ had broken down all the barriers dividing between the

* The term "men," here is used in a bad sense, as the word "world" is now. Cain's seed were the "men"; they made up all the world's history. Their "daughters" are specially mentioned for the part they played in the sin that followed.

† Thus simply may be interpreted that somewhat obscure passage in Jude 6. Then the "angels" here are identical with "the sons of God" in Gen. vi. 2 Peter ii. 4 seems to confirm this interpretation of the word "angel," since he goes on, in the very next verse, to speak of the deluge. Now that these "sons of God" were human, overwhelming evidence will be afforded a little further on above. And as to the word "angel," the English reader should be informed that this term is often used in Greek where MEN are undoubtedly signified. Thus the messengers that John sent to Christ are so named, in Luke vii. 24. So the disciples that the Lord sent to a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him, are such (see Luke ix. 52)

‡ Corruption and violence are the two forms that sin takes. In Prov. i. wisdom warns of violence; chap. ii., of corruption.

two parties; then God, in exact retributive judgment, removed the barriers that restrained the flood of waters from the earth. In the 12th and 13th verses of chap. vi., this sin of men, and this consequent judgment of God, are linked together. The emphasis is lost in the authorized Version through the one Hebrew word being rendered in ver. 12 "corrupt," and in ver. 13, "destroy." There is a striking allusion to this very passage, and to this use of one and the same word for the sin of men and for the judgment of God, in 1 Cor. iii. 17, where again, most unfortunately, the idea suggested by the Holy Ghost is lost sight of by two different renderings in English of one and the same Greek word: "If any one *mar* the temple of God (*i.e.*, by blending the two seeds together, or by upsetting God's own order in His house), "God will *mar* him." The one word in the two clauses shows that the particular judgment is for that particular sin. So here, "all flesh had marred its way on the earth" (ver. 12), and God said, "I will mar them with the earth" (ver. 13).

But some will have it that these sons of God were celestial angels. Now, in proof that the true idea suggested in the passage is the abandonment of separation unto God of the Sethite seed, the whole of the descendants of Adam becoming all united together; and note that wherever a union based on compromises, and then of amalgamation, is affected, this can only be by the avowed witnesses for God forsaking their high standing, for the other side have nothing to surrender—in proof, I say, that these sons of God here spoken of were human, I submit the following considerations. Let them all be viewed as a whole, and surely conviction ought to follow.

1. Turn to the last two verses of Luke iii. There

you have the Sethite line traced backwards, "Methuselah was the son of Enoch, who was the son of Jared, who was the son of Maleleel, who was the son of Cainan, who was the son of Enos, who was the son of Seth, who was the son of Adam, who was *the son of God.*" Thus the Sethite line is headed up by Adam as son of God. In other words, here we have the line of the sons of God. Cain's line was the line of the children of men.

2. Matthew (xxii. 30) informs us that God's angels are incapable of marriage, as also the children of the resurrection will be.

3. Angels are spirits (Heb. i. 7). But spirits have not flesh nor bones either, as Christ explains in Luke xxiv. 39. Now combine these Scriptures with proof No. 2 above. For, putting these two passages together, we learn that angels have not flesh; and in Matt. xxii. 30, that they have no sexes. Now, in proof that the term "angel" is frequently used in the Greek Testament, where men are certainly meant, I have quoted two instances in a note at page 22. But because this point is important, as conducive to a right understanding of the subject, I cite here two more. In James ii. 25, the messengers that Rahab received are called "angels." So again in the Greek of Matt. xi. 10, John the Baptist is termed an "angel." Putting side by side all this Scripture evidence, it seems to me to sweep quite away the argument, such as it is, drawn from the word "other," or "strange flesh," in Jude 6; and the obvious meaning is, that the professing sons of God left their own Sethite side and place, allured by the daughters of the Cainite or serpent race.

4. Matthew (xxiv. 38), speaking of the days before the flood, states that they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage. Here there seems a glance

back to the account in Genesis, and to the various modes of fleshly self-indulgence in which men spent their days.

5. On a comparison of the last-cited Scripture with Luke xvii. 27, *contrasted* with verse 28, the probability ripens into certainty. Of those living in Noah's days, it is there said: "They did eat, they drank; they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark," etc. But in the next verse, the language is varied, certainly not without design. For there, speaking of the days of Lot, the Lord omits all reference to the Sodomites' marriages and of their being given in marriage. Now this very variation as to how the men of Sodom were occupied, as contradistinguished from the manner of life of those in Noah's time, proves that the Lord calls distinct attention to the crowning sin of those antediluvians. But surely in neither Matt. xxiv. 38, or in Luke xvii. 27, is there the remotest thought of angelic sin.

6. And what heavenly angels can here be alluded to? Had they been the holy angels, they would not thus have acted; if the confederates of Satan, how could they be called "sons of God"? Moreover, these "angels," Jude witnesses, are in prison for their sin; but the fallen angels are still at large, and will not finally be cast out of heaven until the rapture of the Church into heaven (Rev. xii.).

7. Already I have shown above the connection between the sin committed and the judgment inflicted by the Holy Ghost, using one single word for these two in the Hebrew of Gen. vi. 12, 13; and again, by a single word for the parallel sin and punishment of Christendom, in 1 Cor. iii. 17. But if the guilty party were indeed heavenly angels, either good or bad, then the wrong

party was punished. For unquestionably it was the race of men, as well the Sethites as the Cainites—Noah and his family only excepted—that was swept away by the deluge. But how likely, how righteous the judgment, if by these professing "sons of God" be signified the Sethites, who had become savourless salt.

8. I think it very probable, as Bunyan* suggests, that Balaam hence got his idea as to how he would ruin Israel, by inducing them to abandon their separation through intermarriage with the Midianites. In his prophecies to Balak he had testified of Israel's grandeur in testimony for God, by "dwelling alone, and not being numbered among the nations." This silent witness for their God he would set aside, and thus devote them to destruction, which he had failed to accomplish by cursing them. Traditionary relics of the deluge would still be rife in his day, as even now among the heathen such are found.

9. All this is often met by the scornful question, how such marriages as of Sethite with Cainite would produce "giants." It does not seem very wonderful that the children of the holy and the chaste should have healthier bodies than the impure should have. But I might return the question, and ask how it can be proved that the seed of angels and of men should necessarily be a race of giants. There is no Scripture in proof of this. On the contrary, Matt. xxiv. 38, and Luke xvii. 27, are quite opposed, as we have seen, to such a view. In the antitype, now fulfilling before our eyes, the answer is very clear; and the answer carries with it the proof that, in our days, both parties are certainly human. For who are the giants nowadays? Those who pretend to be of

* See a long quotation from Bunyan on this point in the "Javelin of Phinehas," pp. 474, 475.

a more heavenly and holy line than the world to which they are joined. Those who use a form of godliness to help themselves on in this world. Those in whom much of the hero-worship of the day is centred. Those who, however great they are in the religious world now, their names as "men of renown" had never been heard of, but for their fleshly piety. Lastly, if these giants had been really half-castes, partly angelic as to their origin and partly human, how would they stand towards Him, the Saviour of the world, who lays not hold of angels, but of the seed of Abraham (Heb. ii.)?

I have tarried somewhat on this passage, because of its extreme importance, and have sought to remove from the reader's mind any bias in favour of an interpretation which blunts its point, at a time, too, when its solemn warning demands special attention. For Laodiceanism, as we are expressly informed in Rev. iii., is the very last guise that the nominal church assumes ere it is spued out of Christ's mouth. The commingling of hot water and cold, the form of godliness without the power—nay, more, the denial of the power thereof, self-content and self-complacency with one's own state, albeit Christ is shut out, as here in Genesis, God was esteemed a stranger, and all witness for Him abandoned; these, surely, are the marks of the religion of the day. And thus the opening verses of Genesis vi., which trace the real and proximate cause of the deluge, resemble the inspired portraits of the present time, as in Rev. iii. 15, or 2 Tim. iii., and all contribute to prove how near its end the age has come. As the Lord predicted, so has it come to pass: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man." May we be looking for Enoch's God to take us to Himself, and heed this warning, and be ready for His signal. So shall

we have disappeared hence, and have at last reached our home yonder, and be shut in eternally with God, ere the world's sin has fully ripened, and the vials of His wrath be at last poured out upon it!

Chapter VI. 14, to VIII. 19. But Noah, who represents the saints to be preserved for the earth, finds grace in the eyes of the Lord. God had looked out upon the earth; and He who had once seen all good, now sees all to be evil. He is grieved at His heart. Let this affecting remark penetrate us through and through. However plenteous He is in goodness and mercy towards them that fear Him, sin is eternally abhorrent to His nature. But what had been said of Enoch is here repeated of Noah. Never does He confound the righteous, however few they may be, with the wicked. Only Noah, as the type of the saints for the earth, is not removed from the scene of judgment and taken up to God. He is to pass through all that is impending, safely sheltered in the ark.

As for this ark, clearly it was God's own thought alone. He likewise gave minute directions as to all its details. Nothing was left for Noah's ingenuity. It was not we who found Christ as One who could save us. If God had not told us, never should we have known that He had a co-equal Son at all. He laid help on One mighty; and whatever Christ is now to us, is owing to God's provision and appointment. For instance: Was the ark to be made of gopher or cypress wood? In this very selection there is, I think, some reference to the shelter to be found in Christ. I am more confirmed in this by the fact that the word here twice rendered "pitch," is called in the Hebrew "copher!"* And then

* The word *copher*, in Exod. xxi. 30, xxx. 12, and Isa. xliii. 3, is rendered *ransom*. It is found in the plural in Exod. xxix. 36,

the passage reads, "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; and thou shalt copher it within and without with copher." For these Hebrew words are allied to our English one "cover." And thus we are reminded of that precious and frequent phrase in the New Testament—"in Christ." In Him only can we be sheltered from the wrath to come. In Him only can we be carried through the region of death and judgment into resurrection life (John v. 24).

So when all was ready, after the exhibition of divine patience and forbearance with the ungodly for a hundred and twenty years, during which the preaching of Noah, at least, in pictured action, as the ark was slowly fashioned according as God had directed, then the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark. Likewise, the Lord has called us who believe in Christ and has safely sheltered us in Christ, though as yet the door is not closed.

In 1 Peter iii. 18—21 is a most remarkable passage, drawing lessons from the scene before us, for our instruction. There three things are ascribed to God, as working by His Spirit. (1) He spake by His Spirit in Noah to the antediluvians, who, however some may have been impressed with the sight of the huge vessel slowly approaching completion, or others who mocked and said, "to-morrow shall be as this day," all ultimately persisted in disregarding the warning message, and are now for their obstinacy consigned to prison, there awaiting their final and terrible doom. (2) Again, by that same Spirit, He quickened Christ who had been put to death. And now again, (3) a similar message is sent to the world

xxx. 10, 16; Lev. xxiii. 27, xxv. 9, and is translated *atonement* In Exod. xxv. 17, xxx. 6, and xxxi. 7, the same word radically is rendered *mercy-seat.*

through us who believe, as was sent of old through Noah, and some by grace having been drawn by the Spirit are saved in Christ and identified with Him, even as those who in a ship go both down and up in it. Only in our case, as we well know, the waves of wrath were poured out upon Him alone. The waters of baptism into which we descend testify of our death, burial, and resurrection in Him. True, the corn of heavenly Wheat was alone till It had died (John xiii. 24). But there in death, though not before, It had reached us, particles as it were of earthly mould. So It gathers us to Itself. Then in Him we all rise together (see also Rom. vi.; and Col. ii., iii.) And He who has called us to Himself, will perfect that which concerneth us. His call of us is not by any means a call for once and then over. We are to abide in Him and to walk in Him. That is to say, His call is continuous and daily. As He once said "Light become, and light became," that call perpetuating light unto this day; so that call of His to us is extending to our affections, our hearts, even to our very eyes and hands. And for our comfort let us remember that whilst the ark rested on the bleak and craggy mountains of Ararat; we have been already in spirit and shall be soon in body brought home unto our Father and our God.

Hence, one window only was there to the ark, namely at the top thereof. For now our eye is to be directed upward unto God. Worship, praise, and thanksgiving, with habitual living in His presence; these are what become us who are saved in Christ. For the deluge imminent then and now are God's own work. "Behold, I, even I, do bring a flood." He that provided the ark is the same as He who brought the deluge. He that has found for us Christ, will presently pour out His unmitigated fury on all unbelievers. Mercy and judg

ment are each among His treasures. Most men now, as of old, scorn God's perfect way of salvation by death, burial, and resurrection in Christ, and so by the passage out of a doomed world into another, where there is no condemnation, the judgment having been all expended, exhausted for those in Christ, by Him. Nay, sad to say, some of those who do believe, unwisely scorn the instructive figure—to wit, the baptism itself.

There is a singular coincidence here, but one on which I may not tarry. I just mention it and pass on. Like as God waited seven days after the door of the ark was shut ere He let loose the waters of the deluge upon men; and again, as there was a like pause of seven days between the warning to Pharaoh concerning the slaughter of the first-born and that slaughter itself (compare Exod. xi. with xii. 15); so there will certainly elapse seven years, between the rapture of the Church to be with Christ, and His subsequent appearing to execute judgment on the world. This is that notable period of which we read so much in the Revelation of twice twelve hundred and sixty days. In fact, this said period is identical, as others have shown, with the last week of Daniel's seventy weeks of years.

Regarding the completeness of the judgment, when at last God arose to execute vengeance, surely such texts as vii. 19, and viii. 5, are adequate testimony to those who bow to the authority of Scripture. The waters reached a height fifteen hundred feet higher than Mont Blanc. Otherwise, had there been some parts of the earth uncovered by the waters, thither could the birds have retreated. Another proof of the universality of the deluge we have in the designed inversion in the list of all flesh slain in vii. 21, with 23. In the former verse, the order followed in the account of the animals that

perished is thus given, "fowl, cattle, beast, every creeping thing, and every man;" but in the latter verse the order traced is, "man, cattle, the creeping things and fowl." Here, surely, is a warning to every one great or small, that there is only one shelter from the day of the Lord's anger. (Read here Rev. xx. 11—15.)

There seems no reason to doubt that the day of the ark resting on the mountain of Ararat is identical with the day on which the Lord rose from the dead. It rested "on the seventeenth day of the seventh month." But by the commandment of the Lord, given at the time of the institution of the feast of the Passover, the seventh month was changed into the first month. Then three days after the Passover, which was on the fourteenth day of the month, the Lord, having passed quite through the waters of judgment, stood in resurrection in the midst of His disciples, saying, "Peace be unto you." They, as well as Himself, had reached the haven of everlasting rest. But though we now who believe are not in the flesh, yet is the flesh in us, and will be so until we are changed, even as to our bodies to be altogether like Him. Hence, sure as the unclean raven and the pure dove both issued forth from this ark, so do the motions of the flesh and those of the spirit proceed forth from us. The two natures co-exist in every Christian. But the dove returns with an olive branch. Oh, joy! the Earnest of the heavenly glory we do obtain, and enjoy even now. When we live after the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, we constantly find that heaven is far from being wholly a future thing. The Spirit of God brings us even now foretastes of that new and better world, into which by grace we have already been introduced (see 1 Cor. ii. 9—12). Then at last God says to Noah, "Go forth of the ark." This word it is most

important we should observe. For much oftener do we hear of being shut *in* and so sheltered from the wrath to come, than of having been brought forth, according to the will of God, into this new, this heavenly region by the Lord Jesus. And even still He is sitting, according as the Lord bade Him sit at His own right hand, and will do so till God shall bid Him rise. I mean that in His continuous session at the right hand of God, His is continuous persistent obedience. But when God's time has come, Christ will come forth and take us at last and for ever to dwell yonder with our God and with His blessed Son!

The Lord's Way with Noah, the saint for the earth.

Section II.

Noah, subsequent to the Deluge.

Genesis viii. 20, ix.

CHAPTER VIII. 20, to end of IX. There can be no question in the mind of a careful reader of this section of Scripture, that these verses as thus specified ought be kept together. For chap. ix., beginning where it to does in the authorized translation, interferes greatly with the full appreciation of the teaching herein conveyed. That is to say, when Noah had builded the altar, and had offered burnt-offerings, so that the Lord smelled a sweet savour, then two verses at most suffice to set forth what the Lord will not repeat in the way of judgment; whilst all the first seventeen verses of the next chapter are occupied with the declaration of what God now can and will do in the way of blessing. And all this is shown to be in consequence of the offering of sweet-smelling savour! Here, too, it should not escape notice that the voice of God alone is heard. For through Christ's offering, God has all His own way in grace and mercy. Himself fills the entire scene. Hence He assigns the identical reason why He will not destroy the earth again by the waters of a flood, as before He had given why He must curse the earth (viii. 21, with vi. 5). So, likewise,

when presently the earth has been purged by fire, God is heard soliloquizing complacently with Himself in Rev. xxi. 5—7. And the fact that this close connection of chap. ix. with the close of chap. viii., and the burnt-offering of sweet-smelling savour is so continually missed, as it has evidently been by those who inserted chap. ix. in the middle of God's utterance in response to that odour which He smelled, affords another illustration how Christians themselves often see little more, and are contented to see no more, than the negative value of the blood of Christ in lifting us from hell, than the negative side of all God's action in grace towards us.

Three points in these first seventeen verses of chap. ix. demand each a word of remark. Here at the outset of the post-diluvian world's course, God establishes for the "good" of His saints, the principle of government (Rom. xiii. 4). And this, His own institution, He has in mercy continued down to the present day. Viewed in this light, it is a coincidence that quickly after the rapture of the church into heaven, the Lord begins to open the seals, causing the overthrow of the thrones of the Roman empire, whereby fierce democracy and anarchy prevail, and from which come forth the terrible beast and his ten kings of the book of Revelation. For it is well that the Jews and the world, having rejected the true King, should know a little of the sort of rule which they have preferred, and of the good time coming, of which their infidel poets have sung. And thus this present dispensation of rule as far as respects the world dates from Noah. Never since that patriarch's day has God once interfered with the course of this age (Luke xvii. 28). And right in between these two interferences of God—on the one hand by the deluge of water, and on the other by the Lord's appearing in flaming fire—stands

the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ, a witness to all men, that however patient God may show Himself to be, sin cannot eventually go unpunished.

Secondly, we read here of His covenant which He made with Noah, and which, in so far as there is aught of grace in it, is taken from that far larger and better covenant made with Christ, and which, through the blood of His cross, has become to us a testament * of fullest, richest grace.

And then, thirdly, we read of the token of that covenant, "the faithful witness in heaven," as God's bow in the cloud is termed in Ps. lxxxix. 37. And now in this symbol of that covenant, there is a hint of grace. For the bow is directed towards heaven, and arrow to it there is none, as if it had been discharged heavenwards. Compare Gen. xlix. 23, referring to the rejection of Joseph, the type of Christ, as king. And surely we who are gathered to the Lord and to His name every Lord's-day, to break bread and to drink of the cup which He enjoined us to do, cannot but recall to mind that that cup is itself a token, and a precious one, of the blood of the new testament shed for us.

The remaining verses of this ninth chapter afford us ample evidence that fallen man is a total wreck—that judgments, however awful and sweeping in their character, may awe him, but do not change him, and that his only resource and salvation is God Himself. He ever fails in that which he has aught to do with. So Judges ii.; 1 Kings xi.; Acts xx. 29, 30; 2 Tim.; Rev. ii. and iii., all confirm the sad truth first found out in Eden, that whenever God has set up aught for man's blessing, sure as its charge is committed to man, he ever spoils it

* See my Leaflet on this subject of Covenant and Testament, First Series, No. .

But God blesses Shem, and, through Shem's seed, Japheth also. "Blessed of the Lord God is Shem . . . God shall enlarge Japheth, but He shall dwell in the tents of Shem." So Hebrew of verses 26, 27. He will give deliverance, or redemption, to Japheth; but He will pitch His tabernacle with Shem. Compare Exod. xxv. 8; Ps. cii. 13—16; John i. 14.

Chapters X. and XI. In casting our eye over chap. x. we at once observe that the Holy Ghost tells us of the descendants of Japheth and of Ham, ere He traces those of Shem. This is His ordinary way, to keep the best till the last. Precisely the same order will be found in the opening chapters of the first book of Chronicles, where the lists of divers genealogies are given us in full. But we shall have a very vivid evidence of this way of the Lord, when we come to consider chap. xxxvi. preceding chap. xxxvii. For the present, therefore, let us pass from this subject.

The main lesson of this entire section is, that as God proceeds to develop His plan for the blessing of man, man, intent on present aggrandisement and power, ever opposes Him. The key to what we read here is to be found in Deut. xxxii. 8, where Moses states what was the design of God when He separated the sons of Adam, according as we find unfolded here. See Gen. x. verses 5, 20, 25, 31. The passage cited from Deuteronomy tells us that "when the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the peoples (Hebrew) according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is His people; Jacob is the lot of His inheritance." For when Israel went into Egypt, the number of souls was seventy (Gen. xlvi. 27). So in Gen. x.

there is mention of seventy nations, to wit: from Japheth, fourteen; from Ham, thirty; and from Shem, twenty-six. The seventy disciples sent out by the Lord Jesus may have an eye to this arrangement of His, which shall yet obtain when His kingdom is set up in power, in the millennium. For man may be allowed, apparently, to retard the execution of His purpose, as he does here, but never ultimately to defeat it. Now that this statement in Deut. xxxii. is millennial, is evident from the name God there takes of Most High, equivalent to the new testament language of King of kings, and Lord of lords (Rev. xix.). Hence, in Ps. lxxxiii., Messiah, after subduing the nations, and quelling all opposition reigns as "Most High over all the earth." See, too, Ps. xci., and what is said of Melchizedek, as in Gen. xiv. 18, 19. Therefore, as we ponder this explanation of a part of His ways, as revealed to us in these verses of Deut. xxxii., we perceive that the will of God, in establishing the earth's blessing, was to group the various nations round Israel as a centre; only Israel, as the medium of this blessing, and so the best, the favoured nation, kept in reserve till the last, till all was ready. And hence the line of the true Seed is traced on, at the end of chap. xi., from Shem to Abram, from whom Israel, and Israel's king, Messiah, was to come. Hence, also, special attention is called to the fact that Eber's son was called Peleg, because "in his days was the earth divided." And so, too, at the close of the list of the sons of Japheth, and of the list of the sons of Canaan, son of Ham, and of the list of the sons of Shem, *e.g.*, in verses 5, 18, and 32, this said division of the lands, and the borders thereof, are respectively marked out as appertaining to the several families of Noah's sons. How beautiful and perfect this way of God! How thoughtful for

Israel, even ere it nationally existed, with the divine smile resting finally on Israel's future King! Yet these chapters (x. and xi.) also witness how rebel man was allowed to interfere, and to delay, the revelation of God's purpose.

For, now, observe how verses 8 to 12 of chap. x. are inserted; as if what they narrated formed a block as to the development of this counsel: so much so, indeed, that if these verses are not read as a parenthesis, the reader may fail to see the scope of these chapters. Then, in the first nine verses of chap. xi., a continuation of this parenthetic account of man's wickedness is found. So the two parentheses, to wit, chap. x. 8—12, with chap. xi. 1—9, we had better combine. Outside these said parentheses the chapters form a long-continued line of the descendants of Noah down to the time of Abram.

As to the former passage in chap. x. 8—12, revealing the guilty way of ambitious man in obstructing earth's blessing from God, the ringleader is appropriately termed Nimrod, or a rebel. This name seems evidently assigned to him as the clue to his entire career. And here compare a scripture or two which speak of the great rebel at the close of this dispensation, "whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming." He is called "the lawless one" in 2 Thess. ii. 8, Greek; and "the wilful king" in Dan. xi. 36. It is suggested that there is something peculiar in his rise. "He *began* to be mighty." So 1 Chron. i. 10. He struggled for pre-eminence, and, by dint of indomitable will, he attained it. In the passage in 1 Chronicles, and thrice here, he is called "mighty," a word of evil omen when spoken of men in opposition to Christ, the most Mighty (see

Gen. vi. 4). So of Goliath in 1 Sam. xvii. 51, Hebrew. He shoots up above all his fellows, and spreads himself like a green bay-tree in all directions, save only that Babylon is the innermost circle of his power. In verse 10 mention is made of four of his cities, all in the land of Shinar, with Babel by name put first. It reminds one of the four Babylonish kingdoms in Dan. ii. and vii., with which there is, no doubt, some designed prophetic connection. Compare my remarks further on as to the four kings whom Abram, the Hebrew, overcame and slew in Gen. xiv. These last we shall quickly perceive to be clearly representative of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome. Then from Shinar he, Nimrod, goes forth unto Assyria, and builds Nineveh (see margin), and other great cities.

"He was a mighty hunter before the Lord." Possibly beginning with hunting the savage beast, his skill and his renown here assist and incite him to subjugate his fellows. The special opposition to the Lord's will throughout this dispensation, and fully developing as it nears its close, is rendered easier in its winning over of many souls by the plausible and specious pretexts of necessity, or of advantage, by which it is defended. For obedience certainly brings us into difficulties which wilfulness at once cuts through. Something singular and bold in his defiance is certainly noted by the expression "before the Lord." And the little Antichrists in the church of God all through this age, who, wittingly or unwittingly, constitute themselves the centre, and even, to some extent, the object of the worship of their admirers, and that, too, where the name of the Lord alone should be all—all the wickedness of these will reach its apex in the worship of the beast of Rev. xiii. Beginning with Babylonish apostasy, it culminates in open

opposition, and is only destroyed by the Lord's appearing. In verse 9 we find he made to himself a name famous for many generations following, even as the giants whom we have considered in Gen. vi. became "men of renown." Likewise Dathan and Abiram were "famous in the congregation" in their day (Num. xxvi. 9); as also the two hundred and fifty princes in the assembly were "famous" too, and "men of renown" (Num. xvi. 2). Ah! it is this terrible love of fame, it is this unwillingness to be content with the Lord's smile here, and with the crown of glory when He comes, which have led to so much striving and restless ambition even in the professing church itself, that has wrought mischief irreparable. Hence, Babel is the present result. See Micah v. 6, where Babylon is called "the land of Nimrod."

Then, in the second parenthesis in Gen. xi. 1—9, we are instructed as to the mode by which Babel was built, which Babel was the centre of those dynasties mentioned in chap. ix. 10—12, set up, be it remembered, in opposition to the government which God had designed through Israel and Israel's future King. So in like manner now there is a Babylon still, who has daughters or religious confederacies many, more or less infected by the ecclesiastical virus that has come from Rome, and all of whom must perish ere the true church of God, with Christ at its head, can be displayed before creation.

The builders of Babel, as again here most solemnly we read, were actuated by the desire for a name, and to avoid the being scattered, as to their carnal minds appeared would be the case, unless they themselves and their city became men's centre. But every way that is not God's must end in utter confusion. He that gather

not with Christ, making Christ *alone* the attraction whereby souls shall be drawn together, however ingenious the method, and however the device may seem to prosper for a while, in the end every such worker does but scatter. Look at the church; behold it, alas! all divided and broken up. The cause is easily traceable. Under favourite leaders, men of renown, professing Christians will range themselves. Then Clerisy—whether avowed or unavowed is immaterial—Clerisy begets Prelacy, Prelacy leads to Popery, and Popery will end in Antichristianism.

It is said that in every known tongue some Hebrew can be found. This is not improbable. But certainly in every sect there is some truth that is contended for; but these particles of truth all radiate from Christ. The only divine mode of union is therefore by clinging alone to Christ, the Truth. The builders of Babel, we learn, journeyed from the East; that is to say, from whence the Dayspring from on high doth visit men. Babel's builders cannot but err, whatever truth they hold; for in their building, in their ecclesiastical organizations, the name of the Lord is not esteemed as amply sufficient. Hence, in their cleverness, they resort to brick for stone, which is man's work, instead of God's; and, again, for mortar they have slime, which in Hebrew denotes a compound formed of the corruption of animal and vegetable substances. In Babylon there is the semblance of the church, and of the divine ordinances; but the whole is corrupt, the whole must perish, however it may for the present afford men tranquillity and security (chap. xi. 2). Better now suffer with Christ, that when His kingdom is established in joy and peace, we may, through grace, be found worthy to reign with Him. It is to Him that this very chapter goes on in the after verses to point.

God cannot be baulked, nor Christ ultimately set aside. All creative good can only come through Him. Nothing but loss can ensue where Christ, who is God's one Centre in heaven and on earth, is unacknowledged. Put what you may instead of Him, and you become a rebel, and your work Babylonish in its aim and end.

O 44 to 94

The Lord's Way with Abraham, the Believer.

Section I.

Abraham's call to Canaan. His blessing by Melchisedek, after the slaughter of the kings.

Genesis xii.—xiv.

CHAPTERS XII. to XIV. At the opening of my remarks I stated that the entire history in Genesis clusters round what is recorded of the Lord's dealings with seven representative men—Adam, figure of Christ; Enoch and Noah, who set forth the two distinctive calls of God, now of some to heaven, and presently of others to earth; Abraham, the believer, the father of believers; Isaac, the son; Jacob, the servant; Joseph, the ruler. These seven men appear subdivided into three and four. We have briefly touched upon the way of God with each of the first three. We come now to look at His varying action with the first of the last four—varying according as Abraham is trustful and obedient, or whether he gets away from God, and falls into sin. And surely to study how the Lord gradually led on Abraham step by step from one degree of faith to another, culminating in his ready obedience to offer up his only-begotten son, the child of promise, at the call of God, seeing that we too are exhorted to grow in the knowledge of God, that we too are believers, who should be learning to trust

Him more implicitly and more obediently every year and month of our lives, surely in this growth of faith we cannot but be much helped by carefully observing the Lord's way with Abraham.

The Lord's call of Abram was "alone." It was a personal call, as He Himself says in Isa. li. 2. Abram endeavoured to bring Terah, his father, with him, and succeeded in inducing Lot, his nephew, to be his companion. It is quite in the style of Scripture to say that Terah took Abram, rendering honour, of course, to the senior (chap. xi. 31). But Terah seems to have been a weight upon him, a hindrance to his own full obedience. For Terah died in Haran; and though probably years were spent in that half-way place between Ur and Canaan to which he had been called out, he does not appear to have heard any further word from God until that call of His had been fully and quite obeyed.

This call of Abram was made by God's revelation of Himself as the God of glory. In Ur, where Abram heard that call, he had been an idolater, worshipping probably the sun, moon, and host of heaven (Joshua xxiv. 2). And notwithstanding that there were only ten generations from Shem to Abram, and that Shem lived four hundred years after he begat Arphaxad, and therefore at least seventy years after Abram was born, still this family, from which, too, the Messiah was to come, had become sunk into pagan darkness. But the light of the glory of God beams on Abram, whereby he at once discerns the vanity of idols, and the greatness of the living God. That sight of God, and that electing grace and call of God, start him. Thus too with us is faith produced, even by a sight of God in Christ. There is, there can be, no other way for faith.

In the call of God to Abram there was the gospel;

for in Gal. iii. 8 this third verse of Gen. xii. is quoted, and it is affirmed that the gospel is comprised in it. For when all the families of the earth were to be blessed in Abram, the Holy Ghost witnesses in Galatians that the blessing is absolute and unconditional, apart from circumcision, or aught else of man's merit.

Presently he arrives in Canaan. His foot is on the land which is to be his "for a possession" (Acts vii.) True, the Canaanite is still there, even as wicked spirits are yet in those heavenly places to which we have been called in Christ (Eph. vi.) But we wait God's time for the return of His Son, when we shall be put into everlasting and complete enjoyment of our blessing. Even now already there in heaven only can we worship (Heb. x. 19), even as for the first time do we also now read of Abram building an altar—that is to say, in Canaan. He moves to and fro in this the land of promise; for, as was said to Joshua at a later period, "Every spot" that the sole of his foot rested on there, was his. If where Christ now is—in the presence of God, in heaven—is our place of blessing, there should we live and move, and there, in spirit and affection, should we be daily—despite of the foe, who will be turned out by Christ as Michael with His heavenly saints, whose battle-cry, as they hurl Satan down thence for ever, will be "the blood of the Lamb!"

The order carefully mentioned as to the "altar," "tent," and "altar," in verses 7 and 8, deserves more attention than it has generally received. Howard, the philanthropist, was wont to say, "Wherever I have a tent, there God shall have an altar." This was pious, but it was not up to God's mark. Christians now, who know somewhat of the peremptory will of God as to being gathered to the name of the Lord alone, will often,

for earthly considerations, remove their dwelling beyond the reach of their worshipping with the assembly of God. First selecting some situation more advantageous, as regards ease and comfort, they will then inquire whether the assembly is gathered there to the One Name. But here we have the way of faith: first the altar, *next* the tent. Then soon in joy will the love of God so fill the soul, as to constrain it to rear another altar. On the other hand, those who walk in the path of fleshly advantage, may obtain their desire, and get as a consequence the leanness sent in their souls.

Whilst Abram adheres to the call of God, more and more of joy, and more and more discoveries of the Lord's gracious will concerning him, does he find. On the other hand, going down to Egypt—type of this world—for a season, he has no altar there; no voice of the Lord comes to him there. After he is once off the line, he gets more deeply involved in sin, one false step leading to another. Hence he not only lies himself, but even acts the tempter to another, and she his wife. God, in His providence, rescues him. For if we will not be guided by His eye in love, we may have the bit and the bridle put upon us.

At length Abram retraces his steps, returns to where his tent had been at the *beginning*, and to the place of the altar which he had made *at the first*. Then at once can he happily worship again. God cannot lower His standard nor abate His call. And it is a great mercy for us, that He cannot. We are called to the fellowship of His Son, and to walk in His light. In heeding His blessed will, we shall have His presence, and not otherwise. Restored, Abram is stronger than ever. Whenever we overcome temptation, the trial proves a blessing to us, we perceive the snare from which we have been

saved, and the grace that kept us. On the other hand, if we fall, we are unhappy till we are restored. Confession and judgment of the sin lift us above that from which we have been delivered, and lead us more stedfastly than before, to depend on God, following Him in the path of faith. Circumstances are sure quickly to arise which, strengthened by God in trial, find us prepared to meet.

So with Abram. He takes revenge on himself. Lot and he have to part. It had been better for Lot to have abandoned all his flocks than to have given up the company of Abram. However, the elder makes the offer to Lot of the choice of the land, notwithstanding all was his own. But he leaves his concerns in the hands of the Lord. Lot, unable or unwilling to respond righteously to Abram's noble offer, by leaving the choice to his uncle—induced by the lust of the eye, chooses the plain of Sodom, even although as the history here significantly informs us, "the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly." He with a bad conscience, by dwelling among them, can only have his righteous soul vexed daily by their wicked deeds. Their company he has chosen in preference to Abram's, in consideration of increased earthly prosperity. And thus, outwardly at least, is commenced that declension of Lot, which, as the narrative proceeds, is seen to become increasingly grave and awful, until at chap. xix. 30—38, the Spirit draws the curtain over the close of Lot's downward career. Likewise, in 2 Peter, whilst of some believers we read of their adding in their faith, manliness, knowledge, etc., and of their obtaining an abundant entrance into the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; of others, we read that they are blind, shutting their eyes, forgetting that they have been

purged, or profess they have, once from their old sins. Such, mingled among the Christianized heathen, learn their works, and lose much of the little portion of light which once they enjoyed. For them the world, at least in its religious side, which is by far the worst, has yet much power, not obeying the clear word of God, "from such also turn away" (2 Tim. iii. 5, Greek). It will be well for such who do not at last prove to have been quite hypocrites, by turning from the holy commandment, to wit, the commandment to holiness delivered unto them. For without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

But the Lord is no uninterested spectator of Abram's faith in Him. Hardly has Lot left him, ere the welcome voice of the Lord greets his ear. Surely this of itself was ample compensation to Abram for giving Lot the choice of the land. Thus did the Lord cause Abram to perceive that if he was now alone as to Lot, he was not alone as to Him. The language of the Lord at this time alludes, undoubtedly, to the choice of Lot. Lot had "lifted up his eyes" (ver. 10). Hence the Lord bids Abram to "lift up *his* eyes" (ver. 14). Lot had chosen to pitch his tent eastward; but the Lord assures Abram that the north and the south, the east and the west, were all his own. And He directs him, as the possessor of the soil by the gift of God, to arise and walk throughout its length and breadth. Surely as we ponder the account of this scene, we must be constrained to acknowledge that the manifestations of God's favour proceed still on the same principle as in Abram's day; that God delights to respond to faith in Himself, that those who trust in Him shall enjoy the power of His word and promise, and shall have their faith increased. Compare John xiv. 21—23. Now, likewise, Abram first hears of the less comparison of his seed to the dust of

the earth. Presently, as he goes on with God, he will hear of his seed exceeding the stars of heaven in number (xv. 5). For Abram is the father of the two seeds, of the peoples of the two calls—the earthly and the heavenly. They that be of faith are the children of Abraham, and "are blessed with him." True, we get not only the best of what was promised to Abraham, but infinitely more besides, even union with the Son of God. Still, also, "the blessing of Abraham has come on us Gentiles through Jesus Christ." See Gal. iii. 7, 9, 14. And the new nation of Israel will be his true earthly seed. Then, in Gen. xxii., after the offering up of his son Isaac, the Lord conjoins these two promises of his seed being multiplied as the stars of heaven and as the sand upon the seashore. Thus God *goes on* in grace with His people. Thus does faith, acting in obedience, hear more and more of His blessed will, and receive more and more from Him. One of these promises has been in the type and shadow already fulfilled (1 Kings iv. 20). The latter promise of the heavenly seed is being actually fulfilled now. And when the children of God are removed to their final home yonder, then will God remember His promises to Israel.

Hence, in CHAP. XIV., we have a scene representing millennial glory, and of the great, the true Melchisedek, coming with blessing to "Abram the Hebrew" (ver. 13), and so representing the remnant of Israel who shall be saved at the appearing of the Lord. But let us look at the chapter carefully, which may be profitably viewed, both in its prophetic and in its didactic, or rather experimental aspect. Just a word on each of these two. Then, at your leisure, you can ponder its teaching more at length.

As to the prophetic picture here, the king of Sodom

with his confederates, are overcome by Amraphel, king of Shinar, or Babylon; Chedorlaomer, king of Elam—which term Elam is the Hebrew for Persia; Arioch, king of Ellasar, *i.e.*, Hellas, as in the Septuagint, Greece; and Tidal, king of nations, who here evidently stands for the fourth kingdom of Dan. ii. and vii., namely, Rome. For the Roman empire will yet again be headed up under ten kings, with one imperial ruler over them all (Rev. xiii. and xvii.) These last will, as we are distinctly warned in Rev. xvii., sweep away quite from off the face of the earth the corrupt, the unclean christianity that is left after the removal of the church to heaven.*

But the Hebrew Abram proves too much even for such potentates. So, in the antitype, first, a remnant in weakness refuse to accept the worship of the beast, and to bow down before his image, the abomination of desolation that he will set up; and then subsequently, when the Lord appears, the Jews will be delivered from all their enemies, as prophetic Scriptures unitedly concur in declaring. On these points I have the less need to tarry, having fully gone into them in my published "Lectures on the Revelation." Then, after the slaughter of the kings, and of their armies, on the plain of Armageddon, the great priest-king, Melchisedek, will bless and strengthen Israel. He was priest of the most high God, which name of God has been already expounded in chap. x. So Christ *brings down* the blessing to Israel; for Israel is to be blessed on the earth. The same Lord Jesus is also our high Priest, but in this capacity His gracious work is to *lift us up* to Himself where He is. But since God is possessor of both "heaven and earth," as Melchisedek pointedly reminds Abram of, so God has not only

* See my Lecture on chap. xvii. of the Revelation.

one blessing, though much the higher, for us, but also another on earth for Israel. Therefore must He appear, to bring down with Him that blessing from God. For where this high Priest is at any given period, there is then the place of God's call, and of man's blessing. In fact, strictly, the Lord Jesus is not acting in this character as Melchisedek at all at present (see Psalm cx.); rather now He is as the antitypical Aaron, within the holiest of all—this one day of grace and salvation. For a reign implies the employment of force, and of the sword, to subdue opposition; but in those supreme heavens, where the Lord Jesus at present is "hid" (Col. iii.), enemies cannot approach. There only His wondrous merits are the delight of God; there His precious blood and His all-prevailing intercession are alone heard. On the other hand, Israel and the world can only be blessed through judgment.

This chapter has been strangely appealed to by some, in proof of the lawfulness of Christians becoming soldiers, and of their engaging in war. Such forget the total change of dispensation since Abram's call to inherit the land. For this church-period has been inaugurated by One, who, when He had enemies, conquered by suffering them to kill Him. Besides which, if any plead this chapter as an excuse for their fighting, such, if Christians, should remember that they fight unfairly. These, killing their opponents, send them, if unsaved, to hell; but if the opponents kill themselves who are Christians, these depart to be with Christ.

Now it is time that we look at this chapter from another point of view. It tells of *three* battles. The first is preliminary to the second, in which the man of faith, relying solely on God, goes forth to attack the confederated hosts, and to deliver his nephew Lot. For

Lot's sin had already found him out; he has lost all his goods, for the sake of which he parted company with Abram, to whom now he owes, if not his life, at least his liberty. Well would it have been for him to have at last heeded the painful lesson which this was designed to teach him when his nest was stirred up. For the Lord could only by His providence address him as one out of communion, and not like He did Abram, holding converse with him as a friend. But so persistent is Lot in his sin, that he actually returns to Sodom for sixteen years, and then he is scarcely saved from sharing its destruction, partly through the intercession of Abram (see Gen. xix. 29).

But, further, this second battle, important as it is, is still a preliminary to the third one, and in Abram's case the most important of all. How severe, to say the least, it would have been in the soul of Abram we may infer by the timely and signal interposition of Melchisedek. He strengthened him after the former battle with bread and wine, and proceeds to remind him that his God is the possessor of heaven and earth. And, remarkably, of this title of God Abram makes prompt use in his reply to the king of Sodom, when he made him his dazzling, tempting offer of all the goods that he had brought back for his own acceptance. Thus we perceive that this confirmation of Abram's faith in God was vouchsafed in the nick of time, just when it was required; for surely that strength is not supplied needlessly. And then he refuses to touch aught of what was the king of Sodom's. Only, with a fine sense of perfect righteousness, he disdains speaking on behalf of Aner, Eschol, and Mamre. For himself, his concern is the glory of God; for others, he states what is their due who had helped him.

The Lord's Way with Abraham.

Section II.

The training of the believer for the inheritance.

Genesis xv.—xxi.

CHAPTERS XV. to XXI. These chapters might be summarized thus:—Chap. xv. Justification by faith, and history of that nation which, stumbling at God's stumbling-stone, is set aside for a while for the heavenly seed; chap. xvi. Flesh active, and Hagar, or law, resorted to; chap. xvii. Grace judging the flesh; chap. xviii. Communion; chap. xix. Judgment; chap. xx. Man to the last unconfiding; yet, chap. xxi., the Lord faithful—the true Seed born, and the Millennium. Obviously, it will be impossible in our rapid survey to do more than touch on the salient points in this summary.

In chap. xv. there are five scenes, together extending over an entire night and day. It would likewise seem as if only in the night-time did the Lord throughout this chapter accost Abram. This probably may be accounted for by the prophecies found here, all referring to Abram's seed during the *night* of their history. In scene one, extending down the first six verses, the time may be about midnight. The word of the Lord comes to Abram in a vision, and, in reference to his self-denial in refusing the goods of the king of Sodom, says, "I

am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward." For God never lets His people lose in the long run for their trust in Him. If Abram refused the spoil of Sodom, he gained in increased joy in God. So it is ever. If one, for Christ's sake, abandons what God calls him from, he not only has eternal life in the world to come, but a hundred-fold more in the enjoyment of God's presence than anything he has surrendered. But God continues with the assurance that Abram's seed, old as he is, shall be numerous as the stars of heaven. And that this latter part of the promise is widely different from that found in chap. xiii. 16, see the remarks already made on that Scripture. Compare Jer. xxxiii. 22, where, as further on in Gen. xxii., the two seeds, the heavenly and the earthly, are each distinctly specified. And well may the heavenly seed be glanced at here, seeing that the precious truth of justification follows in the next verse, and on which passage read the inspired comment in Rom. iv. 3, 17—24.

Then, in scene two, occurring near the morning light, from verse 7 to verse 10, Abram hears somewhat as to the earthly seed which is to possess "this land," asking for a sign, not in unbelief, but in the boldness of faith; for communion with God increases faith, and renders it bold. God gives him his desire. He is instructed to take three animals, for the three kinds of offerings; for Israel can only be blessed through Christ's sacrifice. Each of the animals slain is to be three years old, signifying that his earthly seed should be a sacrifice for three centuries, but in the fourth should come safely out, as the birds.

Next, in scene three, Abram seems to pass the day in standing by his sacrifice of animals cleft in twain. Thus, too, did Balak by his; and thus, too, the Christian should by his identification with the Christ who died, is risen

and glorified—the sacrifice is the plea of him who stands by it. The sole occupation of Abram during the day is to drive away the birds of prey. We, when we appear before God, should have our eye on Christ, and thus be filled with joy, delighting in Him, and in His finished work. But, alas, wandering thoughts, and anxious cares, and unbelief, will, unless they are watched against, obstruct all this peace and joy in Christ. In the type to Abram, these fowls that come down on the sacrifices rent in twain, signify of course the Egyptians, who would fain have made Israel a prey for themselves.

Accordingly, in the fourth place, when the sun declines, the Lord again speaks to Abram, first interpreting to him, in verses 13—16, the sign that He had given to him; and next, when the sun has set, that sign is confirmed by the vision of the smoking furnace; and then with the passing between the pieces of a burning Lamp, symbol of the Shechinah; the lamp is Christ, who is salvation for Israel and for us (see in proof Ps. cxxxii. 17; Ezek. i. 13; and Isa. lxii. 1).

This term "Lamp" is not unfrequently found in the book of Kings, and is there used to denote a son and successor to David (see 1 Kings xi. 36, marg.; xv. 4; and 2 Kings viii. 19). The passing between the pieces of the sacrifice is explained in Jer. xxxiv. 18, to represent the entrance into a covenant of the parties so passing. Wherefore the passing of the lamp here signifies the Lord pledging Himself in that striking way, to succour and to deliver Israel, bringing them forth from the furnace in triumph, and in plenty. And thus the issue of their bondage was seen to by Him from the beginning. And then, as the time for their deliverance drew nigh, He enlarges at once on the minuter details of that deliverance, providing from the outset for their coming forth, not a

beggars, but rather as princes, with silver and with gold in plenty (Ps. cv. 37). They were to "ask" (Exod. iii. 22), (Hebrew, not "borrow") of the Egyptians. For these wages for their hard work were of long date, and had never been paid. But here God's pledge of His succour is unconditional, as seen by the fact that the lamp alone and not Abram passed between the pieces. But the morning cometh, according as we see is suggested, in the fifth and concluding scene in this chapter (verse 18). And there all that God had promised Israel, that people shall yet possess. Never of old did their territorial possessions actually extend to the great river Euphrates, as is here promised should be the case, because the real and full inheritance of the land can only be obtained and enjoyed, when sovereign grace shall have all its own way with them. By a covenant of plaster, which the winds and storms could destroy, they have as yet possessed only a part (Deut. xxvii. 4). At the most a shadow of the truth passed for a moment before their eyes in Solomon's time (1 Kings iv. 21). But God will yet remember every engagement which He has made, and fulfil to the letter every part of His word. Likewise will He act towards ourselves. Even now we who believe are under grace. And ere Israel obtains possession in full of the land promised to Abram we shall have been brought safe home to our inheritance reserved in heaven. The Earnest of that inheritance is ours to be enjoyed now. Still, however, we await Him who to us is the morning Star. Till then our path is a chequered one, being alternated on the one hand in the furnace of affliction, and on the other by the shining of the light from above upon our souls.

Chapter XVI. On this chapter, the third and fourth

chapters of Galatians should be carefully pondered. We find here an illustration of what we are painfully conscious to be the case with ourselves, that unbelief can be present and at work even in a believing heart. In chap. xviii. we have further evidence of this. Abram and Sarai were each of them believers, yet neither at this time appears to have been in a condition of soul to wait patiently on God. The Holy Ghost often in the Word combines patience with faith. See, for instance, Rev. ii. 19; 1 Thess. i. 3; Titus ii. 2; Heb. vi. 12. Nothing tests faith like delay on the part of God; for the flesh will struggle to make itself heard, and will resort to efforts that, at another time, the believer can see the unbelief displayed thereby. For that text is still true, "He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. xxviii. 16). No surer evidence of simple faith and obedience can be named than patient continuance in well-doing. *Talking* of faith is all very well; *walking* by faith is far better. Observe the descending climax in Isa. xl. 31. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles;" that is, comparatively easy; "they shall run, and not be weary;" more difficult this, but the last named is the hardest of all—"they shall *walk*, and not faint." Excitement will carry one through much, but ordinary plodding along in the path of duty, with little to encourage us beyond the consciousness that such is the will of God, and the daily exercise of confidence in Him, that in due season we shall reap if we faint not, no wonder that flesh resists, and chafes, and works counter to all this. Therefore in Abram and Sarai here we may see something of what is in ourselves. Here the resort is seen to be to nature and to law. Sarai is too prominent in this picture; and, out of our place, the readier

are we to commit sin. Nay, she not only sins herself, but invites her husband likewise, and then turns round and blames him. It is a sure mark of a wrong state of soul when one is ready to blame everybody except oneself. God was not hurried, could not be hurried, by the restlessness of unbelief. Possibly the blessing was delayed. At all events, for fourteen years longer, Abram had to wait ere the Lord fulfilled His promise. It is a pithy saying of some one, "Saints who will carve for themselves are sure to cut their fingers." Let us believe God, that it shall be exactly and unreservedly as He hath told us—in His time. The great promise to us is found in John xiv. 3. Then let us recall to mind the exhortation in view of this in Heb. x. 36, "Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." Now that this promise here spoken of refers to that in John xiv. is evident by the next verse: "For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry."

In the first part of this chapter man is seen, as often elsewhere, in failure and unbelief and in abortive attempts, to help himself. Indeed, all three here, Abram, Sarai, and Hagar, are to be blamed. Of the three surely the least part of the blame falls on Hagar. She ought to have been helped, and not stumbled as she was by those who knew the Lord better than she. But the "angel of the Lord," as He is called in verse 7, or "Jehovah," and "God," as His name is (verse 13), finds her in her distress and soul-sorrow, and sets her right again. She was only, in man's account, an insignificant servant maid. Yet she was, as we behold, cared for and watched over by Him that has ever proved Himself to be a friend in need. He was not engrossed with the care of such saints as Abram and Sarai. He knows everyone that

trusts in Him. Though she was in lowly life He knew all about her. And that fountain of water, near which He finds her, must have been a memorial place to her in all after life. It was the fountain, as afterwards it came to be called, "of Him Who lives and sees me." Jehovah, who had appeared to her, she called, "Thou, God, seest me." Thus had He fixed her eye on Him Whose eye was fixed on her. Their eyes had met; and in His look there was forgiveness and restoration of her anguished soul. Now, as He had bidden her, she could return happily to Abram's tent and to Sarai's rule. This had He bidden her to do. Yea, by addressing her as Sarai's maid He implied that she was defrauding her mistress in leaving her home. Thus did He cleanse her from all unrighteousness, whilst He forgave her sin. Christians have no right to leave the place where God has called them, unless there is something necessarily sinful connected with their continuance there. A Christian walking after the flesh is sometimes tempted to think of himself as suffering for righteousness when he is suffering through sheer wilfulness, and through haste to deliver himself out of an unpleasant or irksome position.

Thus this chapter is a very instructive and useful chapter to us all. Such verses also as verses 13 and 14 show us what is true godliness. Finally we note that in His word to Hagar, a prophecy as to how her offspring should fare, was uttered by this uncreated Angel of the Lord, which has been fulfilling from that day even down to the present. Still is it true of the Ishmaelites, their hand is against every man, and every man's hand is against them. Yet they live, though the word concerning them was pronounced three thousand years ago. And if this be so, if God thus affords proof even in this age, that His word cannot pass away; so may we be

sure that, as respects the woe of the wicked and the joy of the righteous alike, every jot of what is written shall be fulfilled and fulfilling in its integrity, its entirety, and for ever and ever (Matt. xxv. 46).

Chapter XVII. Thirteen years have elapsed since man's impatience led to the picture as displayed in the last chapter. During this long interval, Abram would have ample leisure to be ashamed of his own folly. And he and we might at length understand why the Lord appeared to delay the fulfilment of His promise. Romans iv. is the divine clue to this chapter, as appears by the reference there to the rite of circumcision instituted at this time. God waited till "Abram's body" and "Sarah's womb" were virtually "dead." Not till then could He so act as to fill the scene entirely with His own glory. There is a reason for all that God does or delays to do, even though we may not understand it. The same chapter (Rom. iv.) informs us that at this period Abram was strong in faith, he staggered not, his being kept waiting long had wrought its due effect on him, he had seen his own folly in his incredulity and the wisdom of trusting in God. Hence his "falling on his face," as we read in verse 3, was not in confusion, for the identical expression is used again in verse 17, where most certainly it was not so. Nay, rather at the contemplation of the sovereign grace in the Lord again appearing to him, notwithstanding his unbelief, he is overpowered and he worships. And the Lord in a glance back at his unbelief teaches him and us that the one all-potent remedy for this sin is found in keeping the eye fixed on God.

This seventeenth chapter we may divide into two parts —(1) God's revelation of Himself; and (2) the response which He demands in view thereof. Here, for

the first time in the Bible, we encounter the name *El Shaddai*—God, the all-sufficient One. The word "Almighty" scarcely conveys the thought of the original here. The Hebrew word comprehends this power too. For nothing can occur in God's creation which shall surprise Him, or place Him in a difficulty. If sinners boldly and persistently defy Him, He is quite competent to cope with their rebellion or their obstinacy. His little finger will be more than a match, in power, against all their attempts to thwart His purpose. But the term *El Shaddai* may be used, as in fact it is here, in a gracious sense. No strait, no trial, no trouble of His people is such that He cannot triumphantly deliver them from, or, if it please Him, carry them through. Now this fresh and ampler discovery of His name, that is to say of Himself to Abram, was beautiful in its season, when he must have abandoned all hope of an heir, had he "considered his own body." Then in the next verses the Lord proceeds to open out the import of this unfolding of His name, in uttering seven "I wills;" wherein he evidently adverts to His promise, on which Abram had yet failed to lean. See verses 6, 7, 8, 19, 21. In like manner, again, in Exod. vi., God makes another and further discovery of His name as JEHOVAH, to Moses, and explains to him its import, also, in seven other "I wills," in Exod. vi. 6—8. And once more the Lord Jesus has declared unto us God's name in full as, the GOD and FATHER of Him, and therefore the GOD and FATHER of us in Him. And, in my opinion, the epistles of Paul to the seven Gentile churches of Rome, Corinth, etc., are designed to be the seven unfoldings of this name. Well would it be if Christians in general apprehended this truth; and were not, alas! often heard to address Him as the Almighty, which is the term by

which the world is wont to speak of Him, thereby exposing its ignorance, and yet terror, of God. True, in the book of Revelation, this name of God does occur frequently, because therein is displayed the execution of judgment and wrath on all unbelievers; otherwise, only in 2 Cor. vi., is this word to be found, and there, indeed, only for a special and most precious reason.

Now to this opening of His name to Abram, as the All-sufficient One, God expects a hearty and entire response. Hence the admonition, "walk before Me, and be thou perfect,"* by which it is signified that his heart should correspondingly open and expand to receive these overtures of sovereign grace. Hence, also, the change of his name to Abraham, by which he would be reminded constantly of the largeness of the blessing bestowed upon him. And, once more, hence chiefly the institution of the rite of circumcision with which, at this period there was no connection as to law. The law was only introduced at another epoch, through Moses, when this rite concurrently received a legal tinge. See John vii. 22. But its obvious design here was that it might be to him a seal of the righteousness of his faith (Rom iv.), and thus serve as a mark, in the flesh, of separation unto God, which he and his descendants might ever carry. The flesh then not having shown out its enmity to God in the murder of His Son, was cut or maimed, and not adjudged as yet to be altogether bad. But now the ordinance instituted by the Lord requires that the flesh be buried, as that which is utterly corrupt. Therefore, likewise, in the one case was the rite for the children of Abraham and his race after the flesh; whilst in the other, it is for those who have a nature other than

* See explanation of this word "perfect," in Remarks on the Epistles of John, p. 127.

the flesh; in other words, for the true children of God. Only as then circumcision involved separation to God alone, and was of no eternal value without it, so baptism now is not mainly outward, but is only true when the Holy Ghost appropriates us for God, as those who are risen with Christ. See Col. ii. 11, 12; iii. 1—5. In short, the further the discoveries of Himself in grace to the souls which God is pleased to make, the simpler should be the surrender of that soul to such a God, taking sides with Him against nature, flesh and unbelief. God wants us for Himself alone.

Chapter XVIII. Here, happily, follows a picture of the Lord communing with Abraham, and of Abraham, in that high and blessed communion, interceding for others. But before Abraham is fit to enjoy this communion, his heart must be set at ease before God. For still his desire of an heir and God's promise to him are unfulfilled; and, naturally, the older he became, the more solicitous would he be for the speedy accomplishment of the promise. And the fact that God removed his solicitude ere He took him into His secret counsel argues that, otherwise, he would scarcely have been able to attend upon the Lord without distraction. Accordingly, we read here first of a feast provided by Abraham, and partaken of by his heavenly Visitants; and, next, of His assurance to Abraham that His promise to him was about to be fulfilled. Sarah laughs, hearing of this joyful news, as her husband, in chap. xvii. 17, had laughed likewise. Here it is clear from the context that there was incredulity in her laugh. Yet in Heb. xi. we read that, through faith, she received strength to conceive seed. But this apparent contradiction as to the state of soul of Sarah contains nothing that needs to

perplex any Christian; for who of us is not conscious of the presence of these two, of faith and unbelief, in his own heart, and, consequently, of the struggle that there takes place?

Now Abraham, having heard the period definitely named for that blessing which his heart had for so long a while craved, would doubtless have been satisfied; but the Lord had, as we see, much more to say to him. He delights to go on with us in the discoveries of His grace when He has strengthened our hearts to be able to bear them. Many now are content to know that they have eternal life, and care not to inquire for what purpose God had set His heart upon conferring on us this great gift. Neither are such moved by the evident reply that, by communicating to us of His own nature, and of His own Spirit, we may be compelled in some measure to understand Him, and able intelligently to worship Him and hold communion with Him. Never can angels, however exalted, adequately enter into His thoughts, nor into His love. Still less was aught of this possible for them, ere the twofold sight of Christ on the cross for sinners, and of Christ on the throne for believers, had been opened to creature view. Yet these are the two great modes whereby alone God can be known. Let us follow on to know the Lord; so we please Him.

The two angels that accompanied the Lord, being now about to depart towards Sodom, near to which Lot descries them presently approaching (chap. xix. 1), the Lord determines to inform Abraham of what He is about to do, and thus to assure him of His friendship. He also remarkably assigns His reasons for this, which show that His secret is only with those who fear Him, and not with the Lots who disobey Him. And blessed it is to remember that all we who truly believe in Christ

are lifted up into this place of intimacy, as the Lord testifies in John xv. And as we abide in Him, so do the eternal realities of the future become distincter unto us, that we may live in the power of them. Who would have thought that to Abraham, rather than to Lot, whom it more immediately concerned, the impending doom of Sodom should be thus at once revealed? Likewise, the godly are they who know not only their own portion in Christ, but also the things that are coming on the earth; yea, and wherefore such judgments are so coming. Such souls should particularly bear in mind what, of all things in the character of Abraham, the Lord singled out as that which specially met His approval. "I know him that he will *command* his children and his household after him; and they shall keep the way of the Lord" (verse 19). Strange that, in the families of so many of His own people nowadays, His instituted rule is exactly inverted, and, first, the children lead the mother, and the wife rules the husband. Nothing but evil can accrue from such a state of things.

Then when Abraham on the mount of communion with the Lord learns His mind, at once he commences to intercede for Sodom's inhabitants. When freed by grace from all care as to harm happening to ourselves, and when in the enjoyment of His smile, it is beautiful to think of the welfare of others. Even in heaven the Church has not only harps to praise Him therewith for themselves, but golden vials full of odours containing the prayers of the Jewish remnant. And these prayers the great Archangel Himself then offers up to God. (Compare Rev. v. 8, with viii. 3—5.) A certain timidity and irresolution characterize the intercession even of an Abraham here, as weakness marked that of Moses against Amalek in Exod. xvii. 12; and as that terrible

clause "if not" was heard in his entreaties of mercy for Israel, who had sinned, in Exod. xxxii. 32. So too Ananias speaks against Paul to the Lord in Acts ix. 13. Few readers will need to be reminded of how all this blessedly contrasts with the Lord's intercession for us as in John xvii., "Father, I will;" or in Luke xxii. 32; Heb. iv. 15, vi. 25; 1 John ii. 1, etc. Here, likewise, we see that Abraham ceased pleading ere God ceased giving. We dare not guess what other issue there might have been for Sodom, had Abraham continued in supplication, not only pleading for mercy for Sodom, if fifty, forty, thirty righteous were found in it, but further if twenty, ten, five, yea, one such soul were there. No doubt we may infer from the Lord's words: "I will go down now and see," as also from His action in taking Abraham into His confidence as to Sodom's condition, that "judgment is His strange work." If therefore unto us He has shown Himself gracious in constituting us as intercessors for our unsaved friends and relatives, let us catch His mind, and not allow our uplifted hands to flag in their behalf, until we have the answer of peace for them. Study here, the connexion between verses 12 and 13 of John xiv. In the former verse we are said almost ourselves to work the miracle of grace; in the latter, *the same* is ascribed to the Lord, in answer to *our prayer*.

Chapter XIX. Here we see the last of Lot. And to the end there appears something strangely unsatisfactory about him. The Holy Ghost expressly states that he was a righteous man, else we might almost have concluded otherwise. By a sort of second-hand fear of God, and influenced by Abraham, he had set out in his company from his native land to the land of promise.

And very remarkably from the commencement of Lot's history, even up to this chapter, where that history is closed, we read not once of the Lord appearing to Lot, or of His having a word to say to him. And even here, if the angels do come into his house, it is only on his pressing invitation. In the eighteenth chapter, they needed no pressing on the part of Abraham. And there, too, the Lord Himself was with them; here the executioners of his vengeance are alone. And how had he got to Sodom? First, when Abraham had made him that noble offer in chap. xiii., he had meanly and greedily taken advantage of it; and then the inspired language as to his course is traced in minute and painful distinctness. First, he deliberately chooses Sodom, urged too by the lust of the eye, xiii. 10, 11; next he pitches his tent towards Sodom. After that he is found among the captives of Sodom, indebted for his deliverance to Abraham's energy of faith. Unwarned, he returns to the place of his choice and is now a dweller in Sodom, yea, from being found sitting in the gate of Sodom, it would appear as if he had risen to position and to prominence therein, that is to say, to position and even to prominence in that which was evil. Well might his righteous soul be vexed in such company, which yet he had no inclination to forsake. Here he calls the men of Sodom his brethren, and his children and himself are married to Sodomites, whilst not a single hint is there of any intercourse with Abraham during the many years that have elapsed since they parted company in chap. xiii. And even now at the last, if he is to be saved, he has to be almost dragged out. The salvation itself is by the Scripture said to have been partly attributable to Abraham; I suppose to his intercessory prayer. And that prayer could only be heard in bringing him out:

for out he must come, if he is to be saved at all. Lot's wife, who accompanied him on his departure, quickly proved that though bodily she was separated, still in heart she continued there. Therefore, as the Lord Jesus, speaking of her, warns those who may happen providentially to be unconnected with some wickedness, but who would gladly be in it if they could get or return thither, if their step out was not taken in faith deliberately, therefore are such warned, that her punishment was sure, swift, condign, and terrible. When once the Lord speaks out in judgment, there is no mistake as if feebleness were in His arm, or as if hesitation were in His purpose. Men may have thought there was whilst He delayed His blow. They misunderstand His long-suffering, even as they will to the end (2 Peter iii.). He keeps silent, and they think wickedly that the "I Am" is such an one as themselves. Let not readers now forget the warning, for there is an antitype, as many Scriptures testify, to the scene here. But on this antitype I have already remarked, when considering chap. xiii.

I only add here, therefore, that in 2 Peter we have four classes of souls—two classes of saved in chap. i., to wit, those increasing in the knowledge of God, and so waxing stronger and stronger in their separation unto Him; next, some others, converted indeed, but "shutting their eyes" (see Greek) as to the evil with which they are connected; and again, in chap. ii., we see another class, false teachers, denying the Lord, and making merchandise of souls; and in chap. iii. their religiousness is seen to be tending towards infidelity. The several parties of 2 Peter are easily to be discerned, each of them, at this very day. Then in Jude we read of some who need to be pulled out of the fire. Here the

allusion to this (chap. xix.) is obvious. And as the connection of Jude with 2 Peter is admitted by all, so by conjoining the warnings, and interpreting them in the light of this our chapter in Genesis, they become most vivid. Then, in Revelation, all the several stages of th apostasy which we behold all around us are traced in their order by the Son of God. His own people, heeding His call, are seen in obedience in Philadelphia, "holding fast His name, and keeping the word of His patience." On the other hand, some in Laodicea are urged to be zealous, and repent. But our subject is Genesis, and not Revelation; therefore I refrain myself from pursuing further this solemn subject now.

Chapter XX. At the beginning of Heb. xii., the path of the Lord through this world is set in contrast by the writer of the Epistle with the flickering faith of the saints enumerated in chap. xi. There the *special seasons* when they displayed faith are pointed out to us. But Christ was always ready for any trial. Hence, in contradistinction with all those, He is termed, "the Beginner and Completer of the faith." Wherever the true path of obedience and of unswerving confidence in God led Him, there He was sure to be. However arduous the circumstances into which this steadfastness might lead Him, thither and forwards He went, He ran. This divine course could only terminate at the cross. There He died. Then God raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory, that *our* faith and hope might, similarly, be in God. For this cause we are enjoined to "look off to Jesus." His garments were as the pattern Servant of God, seen to be so white in the light of Tabor's Mount, as that no fuller on earth could whiten them. As for the holiest saints of old, their faith was weak,

and their exercise of it only, as it were, by fits and starts. In rare cases, as of Abraham's, where the faith was more continuous, still there was failure over and over again. Christ's was one single "work," one perfect whole from end to end. Others' was mere patchwork, of larger or smaller pieces.

Here we see Abraham again overcome, and by precisely the same sin through which he had diverged before (chap. xiii.) Then he failed when in Egypt; now when at Gerar, half-way between Egypt and Canaan. In full communion and in full obedience only is there security. Out and apart from these, even though by compromise, we are off the straight line, and further wrong we shall quickly get. We might have imagined that, where once he had got wrong, he had been made more strong, did we not know ourselves. Besides which, there was that amount of truth as to Sarah's relationship, that might render him more liable to convey an impression to Abimelech which was foreign to the fact. Alas! Abraham desired to deceive Abimelech, and did deceive him. He was guilty of a *suggestio falsi*, and an unfair *suppressio veri*. And thus by a combination of error and truth are we oft led astray. Only in God's light can we see light, and walk according to the will of God. As a worldly man, Abimelech is here seen to be exhibiting more integrity than a believer; and this, sad to say, is not a rare sight. Abimelech seems to have had some natural fear of God, and to deprecate like vengeance on his nation as that which had alighted on Sodom. Nor is there here any account of Abraham communing with God, nor of God talking with Abraham. Surely the believer in his experience is conscious of some parallel to all this. Five hundred years after all this came to pass, Moses was inspired to narrate it. And thus it is

evident that the Lord notes our conflicts, wounds, depression, and subsequent victories.

For still, blessed be God, the broad fact after all remains true, we are His people. Nor will He abandon us to our foes. He will separate the sins which He hates from the souls that He loves. "No change Jehovah knows." Fickle we may be and are; He sees *us in Christ.* Hence beautiful it is to observe that at the very time when Abraham was so thoroughly down, then the Lord speaks of him as a prophet, and declares that at Abraham's prayer, Abimelech shall live. The allusion here, doubtless, is to the grace by which Abraham had been taken into the confidence of the Lord as to Sodom's doom, and to his intercession in its behalf. By a prophet, I understand one who stands usually in God's light, and who therefore can shed light on the difficulties of others which beset their path through not equally dwelling in that light; and also one who, through abiding with God and in Christ, prevails in prayer with God (John xv. 16). This interpretation of this oft-used term will, I believe, be found to be a clue to every passage wherein it occurs. In the case of the inspired prophet, his light, of course, is so distinct and so purely obtained from God, as to be the very judgment of God Himself. In a secondary sense only, some nowadays more continue in God's light and know His will better than others, and therefore are competent ofttimes to give godly counsel to a "carnal" Christian (1 Cor. iii. 1). But in this subordinate sense of the use of the word "prophet," the light which such an one gives must be brought to the searching test of the Word of God.

Abraham here speaks of himself to Abimelech as a wanderer. The original Hebrew here is peculiar. "And it came to pass when God, . . . they caused me to wander

from my father's house," etc. There may be some allusion here to the truth of God being three-one. At all events, he confesses himself a pilgrim and a stranger. Conjoin with this what we have already heard as to his being a prophet; then we have the double truth—one brought out so much more vividly in the New Testament, viz., of separation—perfect both unto God and from the world; or, as we are wont to say, "inside the vail and outside the camp." There was surely the germ of this twofold aspect of life in Abraham's day. For then, too, the world was a fallen world, and God was the one Resort of His people. Only the depth of its fall and the measure of its hostility had not been gauged; it was the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ that showed all this. And Christ came to give us this life, in either aspect "more abundantly." For through Him we obtain power to become sons of God, and by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost given unto us, we are made joint heirs with Himself; but at the same time we, in this day of His rejection, suffer with Him also.

Chapter XXI. This chapter, the last one in the second part of Abraham's life, has for its chief feature the faithfulness of God in fulfilling His promise. It reminds one of that passage in Habakkuk quoted in Heb. x.: "Though it (or 'He') tarry, wait for it (or 'Him'). He will surely come; He will not delay." The coming of Christ has ever been God's grand promise, and at the same time the believer's hope ever since the scene in Gen. iii., even up to this day. Only in the case of these patriarchs of old, they were looking for a Christ who had not yet come; but we look for One who has already come and put away our sins, and now in human form and in resurrection appears in God's pre-

sence on our behalf. There, by faith, we behold Him. Hence that word of Him, ὁ ερχομενος—the coming One. Of old, in Adam, or in Abraham's time, He was coming. And now, though He has been and gone, He is still nearer to us, even than when on earth He stood among His little apostolic band. For now we are already one with Himself in spirit, so as they certainly were not until He had died and risen (John xii. 24). Now His promise is, "I am coming again" (John xiv. 3, Greek).

Of this coming One, the Heir, the Son, Isaac became at once, at his birth, the type. Whilst yet a child in his parents' house in this chap. xxi.; and, again, when at a later period, Abraham had died, he may in some respects more resemble the Christ that is formed in us—in other words, the sons in their state of childhood as here; or in their life of training and discipline as in chaps. xxv.—xxvii. On the other hand, in the intermediate chapters, to wit, chaps. xxii.—xxiv., when Isaac is fully grown, whilst yet his father is still alive, he appears rather to resemble the eternal Son, the second Man who is the Lord from heaven.

At all events, the Lord did keep His promise to Abraham. He kept it at the set time too. The emphatic style of the language in it may probably be designed as a glance at Abraham's and Sarah's former incredulity. What a fine mode of rebuke of this is the keeping His promise exactly and in all respects. In this way, too, does He oft convince us where we had failed, and manifest to us that we might have trusted in Him. And this the more readily, seeing that this present period is characterized by many "haths" of what God has already done for us, perhaps even more so than by promises awaiting fulfilment. In fact, we have little to look for

now but His return, which is termed "THE promise" in Heb. x. 36, 37. And as to this there is certainly a "set time," though it has not been so set as for us to know. And if this be true of His great promise, let us rest assured that His time for the fulfilment of any minor promise is the right time. Shall not the promises which He has already fulfilled shame us out of our unbelief, and strengthen us implicitly to believe Him for the future?

Legalism is natural to fallen men. Ishmael could only be a bondman from his birth, for *partus sequitur ventrem* —as is the mother, so is the child. Then Isaac born draws out Ishmael's latent hostility to what is of God. Here we see again, as in the respective cases of Cain and Abel, the antagonism of the two seeds (Gen. iii.) These must be diverse, as flesh and spirit are opposed to each other. It has been inferred from the names of his children that Ishmael was a religious man. Three of these, Mishma, Dumah, Massa, may be rendered, "hearing," "silence," and "patiently bearing;" equivalent to the words in James i. 19, "Swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath." This only deepens the lesson. No hostility is there to grace comparable with fleshly piety and religiousness. All this was abundantly evident in Christ's own time here, and is still everywhere observable even now. Ishmael "mocked" Isaac, or "laughed" at him (Hebrew). Strange that this curl of the lip is regarded as "persecution" in Gal. iv. 29. Yet not strange when we call to mind how much of malignity there may be in a suppressed sneer, and of pain to him at whom it is directed. The Lord knows all the wickedness in the heart of man, and forgets nothing of what His people suffer for His sake. No sorrow of theirs is beneath His notice. But as Hagar's seed represents not only all

those "born after the flesh," but specially those "under law," as the old nation of Israel was; therefore it, as well as flesh in general, is set aside when grace reigns. Hence, as it is true that the flesh profiteth nothing, so, likewise, has the sentence gone forth on that nation, "Lo Ammi" (see Rom. ix. 6—8). To this day Israel is a wanderer among the nations of the earth, though preserved distinct from all. For there are deep counsels of love to be fulfilled towards the remnant of Israel—the nation bringing forth fruit, as Christ terms it in Matt. xxi. 43. But then these people, like all others, can only come into blessing on the ground of sovereign grace, and as if they were Gentiles (Acts xv. 11). This is the special line of teaching in the book of Ruth. And Sarah was so far conversant in the ways of grace as to be able to interpret the will of God, and that, too, to Abraham. Thus, by the fulfilment of God's promise to her, her soul also had grown in divine knowledge, and was established. For her words to Abraham at this time are called Scripture in Gal. iv. 30, and shown in chap. v. to be applicable in all directions.

This was the second time that Hagar found herself alone, yet not alone, in the wilderness. It is worthy of notice that, on each occasion, her eyes beheld a well of water. Surely the frequency of this reference to a well where grace is acting—as, when law has done its work, grace loves to display its resources—all this suggests a designed symbol. It was at a well that the wife for Isaac, the typical son, and again a wife for Jacob, the typical servant, were found (Gen. xxiv. 13 and xxix. 2). Likewise it was at a well that Moses, the typical prophet, found a bride, and a home, and a flock (Exod. ii.) Passing over such hints as we find in Joshua xv. 19, with Judges i. 15, there is the case of that wretched

woman who was found by the Lord whilst on His way from Jewish rejection to Gentile mercy in John iv. To her He speaks not of the kingdom, but about the worship of the Father, and of the water of life. For it is His wont, when rejected in a lower glory, to retire into a higher (John vi.);* wherefore does she much resemble in type the Church of God. But she, too, was found at a well. Hagar, like the rest of us, by nature unprepared for sovereign grace, eventually triumphing over flesh, works, sin, and law, is in despair for her seed, counting only on death; then she descries a well, when God opens her eyes. Yet we only read of her filling a bottle. It is true that God is here in the wilderness, and the Holy Ghost is so present as He has never been before. Through Him there is even a well of water in the believer, so that rivers of living water flow out from him (John iv. and vii.) Alas! how little contents us when God would have us reckon on Him; not according to our need, as we often hear Christians in prayer request to be supplied, but according to His own riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He eyes our need, truly, but in supplying it He deals with us according to what He is, not according to the narrowness of our hearts. But how little are we prepared for this abundance! Do "*rivers* of living water" flow out from us? Alas! no. Where is our faith? For the promise is to him that "believeth." The word is in the present tense in John vii. 38, to signify that faith should be in daily, present operation. A bottleful of this water suffices us; yet what a blessing we might be in a land barren and dry, if our faith were simpler.

The chapter, and the entire section,† closes with a

* See some instances of this His way cited in my Lectures on Revelation, vol. ii., p. 107, note 2.

† See the remarks at the beginning of chap. xv.

glance at the Gentile seeking Abraham. And why? Because the son is born. A similar scene is found in John xii., where, first, you see the Church represented by the family at Bethany; next, the Jew, in verse 12; and, next, the Gentile, in verse 20. In like manner, the same concentric circles are beheld here. For here we have Christ and the Church—the Man-child of Rev. xii., represented by Isaac, born after the Spirit; next we see Israel after the flesh, as symbolized by Hagar and Ishmael, the bondwoman and her offspring—for we are the true circumcision, and not they; and, lastly, in Abimelech and Phichol we see the Gentile world seeking the friendship of Abraham the Hebrew, yet reproved by him, who in proper season claims his rights, which had been for a while allowed to remain in abeyance. For yet God will gather together and head up all things in heaven and on earth under Christ His Son.

The Lord's Way with Abraham.

Section III.

The Lord's way with believing Abraham as a father.

Genesis xxii.—xxv. 10.

CHAPTERS XXII.—XXV. 10. Inasmuch as the design of these remarks is to present only a summary of the teaching of Genesis viewed as a whole, so on such a chapter as the twenty-second, where one might be inclined to linger longer, an outline must still suffice, even though its filling up might render the same much more vivid. However, happily there is the less need for much enlargement here, inasmuch as most of us are familiar with the contents of the chapter, whether regarded as a narrative or as a type.

As for the former aspect the chapter is superscribed, God's temptation of Abraham. God and Satan each tempt us. The difficulty is solved by the remembrance of the diversity of object in view of God from Satan. God never tempts us to evil, but to strengthen us in what we know of Him, and in order that we may know Him better. Our wilderness lessons, though they may have been most painful to us, have yet been withal exceedingly profitable. Who of us would like to have been without them? There is not a circumstance of every-day life that does not contribute to test our confidence in God. And if when the trial comes we con

tinue steadfast, we avouch that we esteem His favour beyond everything. Thus do we daily win battles over our sin, and over our unbelief. Then at the end of the life-long struggle there is the crown of life which the Lord has promised to them who, when tried, are found to love Him (James i. 12). All of us have been broken down at times. Still some are more on their guard than others. Some are not so easily betrayed as others. That trial which proves too much for one walking negligently and not in the Spirit, or which might be overwhelming to the same at another time, might only strengthen his faith when abiding in Christ. Abraham had now grown much through God's patient leading and discipline. Then at last came the great trial to display the reality and moral grandeur of God's own work of grace (James ii. 21, 22). Nor was he found unprepared for this. By the God that loved him the temptation was most lovingly timed, when he had become much versed in experience of the Lord's tender mercy. Surely all of us could recall to mind periods in our wilderness experience when we have found Him a very present help in trouble. And though from all of us His children He demands the surrender of everything by faith at His call, yet to some a crucial test such as this sore one may not be presented. For why? They give way at once and readily to a much easier test. Thus life is developing our character which God, if we will let Him have His own way with us, is intent on forming. And the pleasure which the Lord takes in our efforts to please Him, as He evidently did in the case of Abraham here, should rouse us to the fixed determination to yield ourselves unto Him with full purpose of heart. This is to be done by taking up the Cross and following the Lord Jesus every day of our life.

God speaks to Abraham, calling him by his name, as his Friend and Lord. He, in peace and communion, promptly replies, "Behold, here am I." It would seem as if throughout this long and sore trial the soul of Abraham was preserved in perfect peace. Thus in this chapter we have this brief and ready answer to the call, in ver. 1, of God; in ver. 7, of his son; and in ver. 11, of the angel. In each place the reply is the same in Hebrew. A fiery trial like this would surely itself tend in God's hands to produce tranquillity of heart. It would be felt to be a time of the special visitation of God.

In the divine command now given to Abraham are seven particulars, one after another leading towards a purposed climax, in order that the full force of the trial might be felt, and thus the faith, by obedience, be found genuine. Now the obedience rendered was unquestioning; uncomplaining; exactly according to the Word; it was prompt; it was deliberate; it involved the surrender, at God's call, of all possessed; it was to slay his son, and it was to be done by himself. As for the son, as the truth of the Lord's will dawns on his mind gradually, he appears to have bowed his head in hearty acquiescence to the will of God. At this time he must have been old enough to have opposed himself with resolution, had he been so minded. He was not less than twenty-four years of age. Trained, as God had declared that Abraham would train his family, in His fear, he is conscious that for true worship there must be a Lamb for a burnt-offering, which is far more than many of our religious wiseacres of this day are aware of. And when to his question, "Where is the lamb?" he has received the suggestive reply, "My son, God will provide *for* Himself a lamb," silence followed on either side,

which appears to have remained unbroken by either till they reach the place. As if each knew more about the intended victim than they liked to tell the one to the other. And each had leisure for reflection and for drawing back, had either been so disposed. But each remained stedfast in heart. It is well to notice this, that we may learn, *mutatis mutandis,* to copy it. Doubtless, Abraham knew that God would, somehow or other, give him back his son. His language in verse 5 implies as much: "I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and *we* will come again to you" (so Hebrew). But in what manner this would come to pass he knew not; he left it to God.

So, when at last the crisis came, each continued firm. No hesitation was there in the one, and no resistance by the other. "He took the knife to slay his son." Here I admire, not so much the unfaltering obedience of Abraham, nor yet the perfect concurrence of Isaac in that obedience to the divine will, as I wonder at the grace of God that could take up a wretched idolater, so as Abraham had been, and teach him His love, and train him to this entire self-abnegation and self-consecration unto God. A descendant of rebellious Adam, as each of these was by nature, had been so won over by sovereign grace, that to do or to suffer the will of God was preferred by them before everything. Now such obedience we ought to be prepared gladly to render. Yea, even from this example, bright as it surely is, we are commanded to "look off," in order to contemplate One whose path was infinitely more arduous and painful still. And He it is who is our Exemplar. He has given to us of His Spirit; and as many as are led by the Spirit of God, so as He was led, they, and they only, are the sons of God. Fail in detail and in practice we may,

and often do; yet our calling to association with Himself and to tread in His footsteps is unchanged.

But it remains for us to inquire, in the presence of a type of far higher things, as we all feel sure we have here, what is the great truth itself foreshadowed under all this? Was the offering up by Abraham of his son designed to be a picture, and a lesson to us as to what it cost Him who spared not His own Son, but freely gave Him for us all? Or, on the other hand, are we here taught that the sinner deserved death and must have met it, had not a ram—a substitute—been found instead? It appears to me there is no need for these two views to be regarded as antagonistic. Surely here, as in many other Scriptures, we behold a double type of Christ. For instance: we have elsewhere the burnt and sin offerings: the two goats; the two birds, or sparrows; —Moses with Aaron; David with Solomon; Elijah with Elisha, and divers others.

Now, as to the former aspect, Isaac is termed Abraham's only-begotten, and is said to have been actually "offered up" (James ii. 21). "In a figure," too, Abraham received him from the dead; and, what is very remarkable, after that he must have been accounted by him as good as dead for three days—I mean, from the moment when he heard God's command, till the time when he came down from the mount. The place, too, was "the land of Moriah," wherein David at a subsequent period built an altar, and where Solomon reared the Temple, and in which Calvary itself was situated. Again, if we look at Isaac, we see depicted, in his carrying the wood on which himself was to be slain, the voluntariness of the sacrifice of Christ. He delighted to do the will of God. That the world might know that He loved the Father, and as the Father gave Him commandment, so

He went onward up to the cross. Was the wood laid on Isaac, and presently Isaac placed on the wood? Thus on the cross was sin laid on Christ, and He Himself was made sin for us who knew no sin. In fact, not a single feature of importance in the history is there, but it finds its counterpart in some precious feature of God's and of Christ's love. The shadow may, in many respects, be faint, compared with the great sacrifice itself. For instance, on the cross of Christ the divine eye had been riveted ere the world began. All through His human life, too, the cross at the end of His path must have weighed on Christ's soul. When He read Isa. liii., He would have no occasion to ask, as did the Ethiopian eunuch, "Of whom speaketh the prophet thus, of himself or of some other?" And of all that chapter, the verse that might appear to have most keenly touched Him was the clause, "He was numbered with the transgressors." For this sentence He specially singled out for observation as the time of the cross drew nigh; whilst Abraham's knowledge of what sacrifice was required of him extended, as we have seen, only over three days, and Isaac's acquaintance therewith for probably a less period still.

On the other hand, the ram was caught, and Christ was held fast by the horns of His strength and love. It was not left to Abraham to find the ram, nor to the sinner to procure a substitute. Neither Abraham in the one case, nor we in the other, had any idea of such a mercy. Nay, more; unless we had been distinctly certified thereof by God, never should we have known that God had a Son, and that that Son could be, only could be and would be, the Victim. God found us Christ, and gave Him up expressly that He might die the Just for the unjust. Then the soul, acquiescing in God's way

of grace by the substitution of this Saviour for itself, sees death to be its own desert, and bows to the sentence, and at once obtains resurrection in Christ risen.

As Isaac descended from the mount, not one scratch, we may be sure, was to be found upon him. He stood, "in a figure," in resurrection, even as we in Christ are beyond judgment, beyond the cross and the grave. We are in Christ, but Christ is not dead. Christ is risen, is glorified. There, then, likewise, is our standing. The cross is not between the believer and his God, but between the believer and *the world*. The cross is behind him, and by it he is crucified to the world, and it to him. And now he belongs only to God and his Father, and to the Lord Jesus Christ his Saviour. Henceforth such a one is a saint, a separated man, a pilgrim and a stranger in this world. He is only here at all through having been first taken out of it by Christ his Lord, and then sent back as a risen man to "bear much fruit" (see Rom. vii. 4). For this cause this wonderful chapter closes with a list of children related to Abraham. And likewise, in the promise of God to him here, we now find conjoined the mention of the heavenly and of the earthly seeds. Previously, the Lord had first assured Abraham that his seed should be as the sand of the seashore (chap. xiii. 16). Later on, the Lord had said that his seed should resemble the stars of heaven in multitude. But here the word is as to both of these families; to wit, of the earthly and of the heavenly. And, lastly, we are instructed in that notable parenthesis of Gal. iii. 15 to iv. 7, that the term "seed," which itself may, of course, be either singular or plural, points mainly to Isaac coming down from the mount as the type of Christ in resurrection. He is the true Seed, the

true Son, the only Head. Of Him "every family in heaven and earth is named" (Eph. iii. 15, Greek).

Chapter XXIII. "The God of glory gave to Abraham no inheritance" in Canaan; "no, not so much as to set his foot on; yet He promised that He would give it to him for a possession." Thus was he taught to trust and to wait. He was "a stranger in the land of promise" (verse 4). The Hittites claimed the soil on which he stood; yet was he "the friend of God." No sign, then, is it of a lack of His friendship to have little or no portion here. Even if Abraham required a place for sepulture, he must purchase it. Of all places in Canaan, Hebron, where Sarah died, seems to have been the best known to the Israelites, previous to their entering on its possession in Joshua's time. It is particularly singled out in Num. xiii. 22, when the Spirit would show that the whole land belonged by gift to Israel ere that nation went down to Egypt. Hebron was built ready for them, "seven years," a complete period, ere Zoan, in Egypt, was. Yet it was here, of all places, that Abraham had to buy land in which to bury his dead. Truly the ways of God are wonderful. We may here well be reminded of Another, who, when He came to His own property, His own people on it received Him not. They said, "This is the Heir," and they killed Him. All that He had here was, as we say, a cross and a borrowed grave. And now His own are surely taught to hold "lands and houses," at most, with a light grasp (Acts iv. 34). *Our* place of blessing is in the heavenlies, where all spiritual blessings are by us to be enjoyed. On earth, having food and raiment, let us, as blessed with believing Abraham, be content. God will put all in their respective places round His Son in His good time. If His Son

has been cast out and slain, and is Himself waiting for His prayer to be answered (John xvii. 24), and expecting till His foes are made His footstool, we cannot do better than wait and suffer with Him. Faith knows, on the warrant of God's Word, that He is risen. The Holy Ghost has come down to testify of His glory in the highest heavens; but here below Satan reigns on sufferance, and by usurpation. The Lord accepts for a while His rejection, whilst a heavenly people are being drawn to Him yonder.

Meanwhile, Israel is a widow. She has had a hand, yea, and the chief hand, in the murder of her Husband. Never in Scripture is the Church of God compared to a widow. That one in Luke xviii. 5 cries for vengeance, which assuredly is not the Church's prayer, but Israel's, as in the Psalms. As yet, the Church has never been married to the Lord; she is only betrothed; and this present period is the interval between the betrothal and the marriage, during which love-messages are sent by the Bridegroom to the bride. The bearer of these to us is the Holy Ghost (John xvi.); and the Lord and we are each waiting for the nuptial day (John xvii. 24).

Israel as a nation is dead. It was consigned to the grave by the Lord when He pronounced upon it the sign of Jonas the prophet.* God can breathe upon the slain, and cause them to live. The vision of a valley full of dry bones that the prophet beheld, though it may,

* Jonas, like Israel, refused to witness for God; and, like to ourselves, he was disobedient, and sought to flee away from God. Then Christ, taking the sinner's true place, not under mere water, but under the waves of God's wrath, sinks into death. Then, coming forth as the Resurrection and the Life, first He gives life to us, and presently, as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, quoted above, show, He will revive Israel after two prophetic days (Hosea vi. 2).

perhaps, properly be used to illustrate the resurrection of the body, or the divine quickening of the unregenerate, was primarily given to set forth the revival of "the whole house of Israel" (Ezek. xxxvii. 11); and still do these "children of thy people," as Daniel was told, "sleep in the dust of the earth" (chap. xii. 2). But "thy dead men shall live." The earth shall "cast out" these dead. They shall "awake and sing," though now they "dwell in dust," as Isaiah predicts (chap. xxvi. 19). Thus, as the Church in the heavenlies, so Israel in the earthlies, obtains the promise only in resurrection. Hence it is that this sign of Jonas was uttered by the Lord Jesus on two several occasions. When first He spoke of this sign of death and resurrection, He next proceeded to speak of the kingdom of *heaven* and its mysteries, thereby signifying that His reign on earth, and concurrently Israel's time of blessing, were, through that nation's unbelief, delayed. Now Israel can only become a witness for God, and a preacher to the world, as Jonas in resurrection was. (Matt. xii. 40, with Matt. xiii.) Then, shortly after, the Lord repeated this same sign, when at once you hear of the Church, and of the Rock on which that Church is built (compare Matt. xvi. 4 with verse 18). Thus, whilst Israel, for not recognizing her Messiah, is temporarily set aside, the Church is called out and constituted during the Lord's absence, to be the heavenly witness for God in the world. Even this very earth itself must pass through a sort of regeneration, or resurrection (Matt. xix. 28). And thus, whether it be of the Lord Himself, or of His Church, or of Israel, or of the earth, God's way is one, even by that one, that no eagle's eye has seen, namely by death and resurrection.

But, in regard to all of this, each part in its own due

season. Here in the type Israel dies—"For your iniquities is your mother put away" (Isa. l.) On Sarah personally is bestowed this honour, that she only, of all women in the Bible, has the number of her years recorded. But, typically, the Lord has deeper counsels of love to unfold, while Israel acknowledges Him not.

Chapter XXIV. Though Israel for a time remains in ignorance and in death as to her Messiah, yet Christ's resurrection is the secure guarantee that all promised to that nation shall ultimately be fulfilled, and the nation revived and restored (Acts xiii. 32, 33). Meanwhile, that same resurrection is the occasion of the outflow of grace to the world at large (Acts xiii. 34, with Isa. lv. 1—3). But Israel having rejected Him on earth, and again in resurrection, the Lord has retired into deeper glory, and has sat down at the right hand of God. When the Jews murdered Stephen, and thereby consummated their rejection of Christ a second time, then He raises up Paul to unfold the doctrine of the Church. And in the Church there is neither Jew nor Gentile, but Christ is all and in all.

Now, whilst the Church for the heavenlies is being gathered out, the Lord has nothing to do with the earth as such, save in a providential manner. *He remains hidden in the Father's house.* She is brought thither to Him by Another. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are equally God; but officially, as Christ has been pleased to act as the divine Servant of the Father, so the Holy Ghost is engaged in acting as the divine Servant of Christ. Hence, mark what emphasis is thrown again and again in the type here, that the son Isaac, as if risen from the dead since chap. xxii. is to remain in the father's house, whilst the servant comes forth to woo

and to win a bride for him (chap. xxiv. 6—8). No one type of Christ in any character can be a complete representation of the One so gloriously full. Hence, in the case of Jacob the servant, he goes forth and serves for a bride, and fairly earns her. For Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for *it* (Hosea xii. 12, with Eph. v. 25). And the way of the Spirit of God in sketching the types of Christ is sometimes, as here, to put the higher aspect first; so similarly the account of the burnt-offering precedes that of the sin-offering in Leviticus.

So as we here see our calling is quite a heavenly one, as is evidenced by where Christ continues during that call of the Holy Ghost sent forth in person to tell of the hidden glories of the Son, and of the priceless value of His work and blood-shedding, as seen, and seen only, in the uncreated light of God's immediate presence. It is impossible that anywhere else but *there,* for the full worth of His blood, and of His finished work, to be seen. And there He is at present; and down here the Holy Ghost is on purpose to tell us of these heavenly glories. See especially John xvi. 13—15; 2 Cor. iii. 18; and Eph. i. 17. In the tabernacle of old, some vessels were of brass or copper, and others of gold. Those which were uncovered were of copper; at which *sin* was dealt with and judged according to the divine perfections. But those perfections are not fully revealed by the somewhat negative way of coping with our sin. Beyond all this, what God is *in Himself,* what are the riches of His grace, of His love as in making us His born sons and daughters, and in rendering us competent for the inheritance of the saints in light and much more to the same effect, on a like grand and infinite scale, all this was borne witness to by some of the furniture in the

tabernacle being covered with pure gold. Now it was on and before the mercy-seat, made of pure gold, that the blood was sprinkled upon the day of atonement. Therefore, during this age, antitypical of that day, God is telling out the value of Christ's blood, according to His own estimate thereof, by His supreme kindness to us who are the pretrusters in Christ, whilst that Christ is *in there*. On the mercy-seat of old, there was blood —symbol of death—only; but now, Christ, as the mercy-seat, is "placed forth" outside, for any sinner at once to approach (Rom. iii. 25); whilst, also, the living Christ, His Son, is seated upon the throne within. Being a man, he requires a throne, which the mercy-seat is never once called. Being the Son of the living God, as seen in there, the Church is in continuance of being built upon Him (Matt. xvi.) Being our Life He is "hid" in there (Col. iii.); and we, by the Holy Ghost, are being drawn to Him, whom we have never yet seen. Our affections are set, or should be, on things above, where He is. Moved by the wondrous story as to who He is and what is His love, and of the Father's counsels concerning Him and in Him, about us, we have been spoiled for all here that once our hearts had been set upon. Those things have been set before us, of which once we never had an idea; they had never entered our hearts. But now we, through the Spirit, wait for the hope suited to such a righteousness as ours is!

Like Rebecca, we have believed the word that the servant of the risen Son has told us. It has sunk into our hearts; it has detached us in spirit from the empty scene all around us. We have set out on our pilgrimage. The Holy Ghost Himself is our companion throughout our journey. Thoughts, and vistas, and tastes of heaven

He the Earnest gives to us whilst yet on the road. The full certainty that we shall reach home at last, and see Him that has loved us, and be with Him and like Him for ever, animates us in our daily plodding along, which is not without its difficulties. Though nothing is more crooked or uneasy to ride upon than the camel, little leisure would Rebecca have to be annoyed thereat, through her companion's solicitude, and her prospect at the end. God, in His Word, oft points us to the end. He contrasts, too, the "end of the wicked," and the "end of the Lord," which He accords to His own.

So when her journey neared its termination, we may note how on the alert Rebecca was. She felt that he who was advancing was Isaac, the risen one, the son of the father himself. Thus daily do we wait; aye, and watch for Him. And he did come forth to meet and to welcome her who had come out to meet him. She covered herself with a veil as he approached, and we shall be self-hidden and abased adoring in His presence. In the case of Isaac, he took the bride that the father had chosen for him. On the other side of the double type, to wit, Jacob, he got the wife of his heart's choice. The two together fully and blessedly set forth how that the Father has given us as the Bride to His Son; and how that Bride is likewise she on whom His own heart had been set. We are the eternal choice of both the Father and the Son; "And all mine are thine, and thine are mine," said Christ to that Father.

Lastly, we read that Isaac "loved" Rebecca, and was comforted after his mother's death. Christ loved us ere the world began; He loves us now, He loves us to the end. He will love us home; and when at last at home with Him, He will still love us. Surely this finishing touch in the type is delightful! For a while He has lost Israel, but He will provoke that people to

jealousy. But when these, His brethren after the flesh, do at length come and bow themselves down to Him, as they will do when as the antitypical Joseph He rules over the world, such will discover that during their rejection of Him, there is a Bride nearer to Him than they, and she an Egyptian. But here I am anticipating what we shall look at presently.

Thus have I briefly touched upon this most instructive and thrilling type. It is one which I trust we have all often enjoyed and profited by. Hence if there had been time for me to enlarge more fully, there is the less need for this. Here we have a pilgrim's progress, indeed, far more glowing with the light of heaven and with the glory of the risen Son than Bunyan dreamt of; and this account is traced with an inspired pen.

In the history there is little necessitating remark; to only one point do I advert. As the Holy Ghost has been pleased to act as the great servant of the Lord Jesus, so does He condescend to employ under-servants many. These, whether in wooing the hearts of sinners to Christ, or in urging the saints to come forth to meet the heavenly Bridegroom, would do well to copy from this Eliezer here. His whole work was carried on in prayer. There is more about prayer in this chapter than is to be found in the entire book. And when, in view of the responsible character of our work, we pour out our souls unto God, the Spirit Himself within us helps our infirmities. Let us never forget this.

This last section of the life of our patriarch concludes with a word as to his marriage with Keturah, of his offspring by her, and then of his own death. Now as Hagar and Ishmael, as we have seen from Romans and Galatians, represent Israel according to the flesh, so likewise here may be a glance at that Gentile world, which with the Jew is to be blessed presently on earth;

for the blessing of the nations in due time depends on their connection with the Hebrew, and their subordination to Israel under its rightful King. Sebah and Dedan, two of Keturah's descendants, are especially mentioned as opponents of Gog, in his disastrous march into Canaan against Israel (Ezek. xxxviii. 13). And those nations or Gentiles siding with Christ's earthly brethren during their great coming period of sorrow, are singled our for favour by Him in Matt. xxv. 40. Viewed in this light, it would appear that each of the women who pass before us in this section is a representative character; Sarah, as the mother of the true seed; and Hagar, Keturah, and Rebecca, Israel after the flesh, the Gentile and the Church of God. Here compare a parallel type in 1 Kings. After Solomon has built the temple, as Christ is now engaged in building the Church, there is His own house,* Israel, and next "the house of the forest of Lebanon," the last of these, an earnest of the blessing of the nations in the millennium (1 Kings vii. 1, 2; Rev. xxi. 24).

Lastly, we read that Abraham died in a good old age, and was "gathered to his people." Not so bright an outlook for these saints of old, as is now the portion of every Christian (see 2 Cor. v. 8, and Phil. i. 23). Luke xvi. speaks of a pious Jew carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. And this, too, was ere Christ's own death and resurrection had wrought such mighty changes. But now John xxi. 7, and 2 Cor. xii. 1—4, set before us the former in symbol and the latter in plain statement, the prospect of a believer on his death-bed.

* With the number of years (thirteen) during which Solomon was building his own house, compare the number of bullocks offered for Israel at the feast of tabernacles (Num. xxix.). And see a suggestion thereon in my Lectures on Revelation, vol. ii. p. 182.

The Lord's Way with Isaac, the Typical Son.

Genesis xxv. 11 to end of xxvii.

CHAPTER XXV. 11. Now the fifth of the seven representative men of Genesis is fully before us. Here, it is submitted, we have the divine teaching in the type of Isaac, as to a Christian's *standing* and *sonship*. For, on account of the reason already assigned in chap. xxi., Isaac *here* seems rather to represent the sons, than THE SON. Only as an adult, and during his father's life, is he the type of THE SON. And first, at the very outset, and in a most marked and definite manner, the proper status and dwelling-place of Isaac are set before us. With designed prominence is the statement in the text given, "Isaac dwelt by the well of the living and seeing One" (xxv. 11). When just now we come to chap. xxvi., we shall have to revert to this important passage, as the clue to that entire chapter. But I take occasion hence at once to call attention to the place where a believer, as a risen son of God, is ultimately to be brought, and where by faith he should constantly abide, even now. I mean, of course, the presence of God, and under the very eye of God. There is no perfect, enduring rest anywhere else. Eph. v. 27; 1 John iii. 2; Jude 24; and especially for now, 2 Cor. iii. 18.

Next, according to the usual style* of the Holy Ghost in the Word, ere aught more is said of the one blessed of God, the account is furnished us of Ishmael's offspring, and of his death. He begat twelve princes, according to the promise made by God to Abraham in chap. xvii. 20. Since Hagar and Ishmael represent Israel after the flesh, there may possibly be a shadow here of the twelve tribes of Israel; "princes" and "thousands" being used interchangeably of that nation (Micah v. 2, with Matt. ii. 6). Already reference has been made to three of his sons, Mishma, Dumah, and Massa, in chap. xxi. I may add that three others of these sons are alluded to in Isa. lx., Kedar, Nebajoth, and Adbeel, "a cloud of God." Then we are told that Ishmael died in the presence of all his brethren.

Now we can, without distraction, attend to the type of the sons risen in and with the Son. Here four points of instruction demand our consideration. First, the birth of the twins, Esau and Jacob, and the despising of the birthright by Esau; secondly, Isaac's departure to and tarriance in Gerar; thirdly, his return to Canaan, and the prompt action of God towards him on that return of his; and fourthly, the blessing, despised on the part of Esau, sought for, though with tears yet in vain, when too late.

Now, inasmuch as the subject of the chapters which we are considering is in type sonship, it has pleased God first to place before us that sonship with Him ever rests on His own free choice, and that He is a sovereign God. This He had already affirmed in His attitude towards Ishmael and Isaac. But now in these other cases of Esau and Jacob, this affirmation is repeated more distinctly and peremptorily. For whilst in the

* See further on, at chap. xxxvi.

case of the former two, Isaac was the child of promise, and not Ishmael; yet the force of this Scripture ruling might seem to be weakened by the fact that though their father was one, their mothers were two, and one a bondmaid but the other a free woman. But here, on the other hand, no scope for such an objection is possible. Their father is one and their mother is one; themselves are living, and ere they are born, or have done good or evil, the divine choice is announced to Rebecca. And then, in Rom. ix., the Scripture here is quoted and dogmatically applied to ourselves. Only, be it ever remembered that whilst the choice was of God, ere the children had come to the birth, yet the word as to the "hatred" of which we read in the next verse, in Romans, is a quotation, not from this passage in Genesis, but from Malachi. That is to say, we hear first of the "hatred" after the children have lived, and after the natural wickedness in the heart of the one, unchecked by divine grace as in the other, had developed itself into a sinful course of life. The same way of God obtains even now. If we be indeed His children, this is owing to His own predestination and election (see Eph. i.). On the other hand, we read of God's hardening men's hearts. But *when*—at what period of their life is He said to do this? After they have disdained to receive the truth in the love of it, that they might be saved (2 Thess. ii. 10—12). So in Romans ix., of the vessels of mercy we read that He prepared them beforehand for glory. But of the vessels of wrath, they are only said to be fitted for destruction. It is not said that He fitted them. It is implied that sin did this, as a barrel of gunpowder is fitted to produce an explosion. In other words, the preparation of some for glory is spoken of in the active voice,

God being the agent. But the fitting for destruction is in the Greek in the passive voice, and is not attributed, as is the other, to God. So Matt. xxv. 34 with 41. I might add, if more evidence on this important distinction were needed, that hatred itself is often spoken of in Scripture, when a less love only is meant. Compare verses 30 and 31 of Gen. xxix.; and again, Matt. x. 37, with Luke xiv. 26.

Accordingly, when the boys Esau and Jacob reach maturity, an occasion offers itself for the display of the heart's scorning of God, when uncontrolled by grace, in the sale by Esau of his birthright to Jacob. I do not assert positively that, at this early period, Jacob possessed the grace of God; still, attention is called in the narrative to the pilgrimage style of life of Jacob, as "dwelling in tents," with which marked feature of his every-day life compare the emphatic comment on this practice of the patriarchs in Heb. xi. Also, instead of the clause, "Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents," the Hebrew has it, "Jacob was a *perfect* man"—the same word as is afterwards used of Job. Nor let any of us forget that, of this very sin we ourselves are admonished to see that none of us are found guilty as Esau—"who for a meal sold his birthright." This, in effect, we should be if we set anything in preference before our hearts to His favour, whether it be a trifle, or aught or all that the world has to offer. The time came when Esau rued his bargain, as we shall see. So will sinners in eternity; but he and they rue it too late.

Chapter XXVI. Secondly, chap. xxvi. tells of Isaac departing from the well of the living and seeing One in Canaan, and presently settling down in Gerar. But now, since some have denied the sin of Isaac in this

matter, and because here certainly is represented in type the standing of a son of God, and his failure often to maintain that standing in the divine presence, and his enjoyment of divine communion, to which in sovereign grace, and by the blood of Jesus, he is ever entitled, therefore it will be well here to call careful attention to the exact words used by the Spirit of God. The English translation of certain terms in this passage by no means comes up to the vividness and emphasis in the Hebrew. All will note the injunction, "Go not down to Egypt," and ponder the preposition "down," which often has a moral force, in it, *e.g.*, in Luke x. 30. But, further, verses 2, 6, and 17 should be rendered thus, "*Shechinah* in the land," etc. (verse 2); "*wander* in this land" (verse 3); and "Isaac *settled* in Gerar" (verse 6); and again, "Isaac *settled* there" (verse 17). The word for "settle" denotes properly to sit down at ease. So in Luke xxi. 35 we read that "that day shall come as a snare upon all them that are *settled* on the face of all the earth." Thus this settling down of Isaac is spoken of by the Spirit as if it were wrong, and it is so spoken of twice. Moreover, this settling down was in a border land, never a right thing for a saint to do (see Song of Sol. iv. 8). In fact, Lebanon, spoken of in the Song, is in the Holy Land, though at its outskirts. But Gerar was not at all so situated. It is midway between Canaan and Egypt. And all of us will have noticed that never once did the Lord Jesus, when on earth, pass the limits of the Holy Land.

Further, Isaac was to "Shechinah in" Canaan. This suggestive word finds its interpretation, as we have seen, in chap xxv. 11. His proper abode was by "the well of the living and seeing One." In the antitype the matter is quite simple. We are called to abide in Christ

and to walk in the light of God. There only can we have fellowship with Him. All darkness, even the least, is abhorrent to His nature; there He cannot hold communion with us. He can come down into our darkness; He has done so. The Lord Jesus thus came into our place on the cross; but He did this to lift us up out of it, and to lift us into association with Himself perpetually and for ever. There by His blood we are ever entitled to remain. It is by His blood-shedding it hath pleased Him that He Himself should go in there; and this on purpose to show us where the blood entitles one so entering into God's presence to be. Hence, whilst in Heb. ix. 12 we read of Christ's entering and continuance there on the ground of His blood-shedding, so in Heb. x. we also read of our boldness to enter there on that same ground. And therefore the Lord Jesus Himself and the believer are before God on precisely the same ground. If that ground can be weakened for me, so likewise it can for Him. If on that footing He remains there, so may I too. There, in that holy of holies, the uncreated light of God shines on Him and on us also. That Shechinah, bright as it is, only displays the richness of the blood of Jesus, and so the security of my standing. Shame on me that I ever get away in experience, and so, as far as I can, disparage the blood of the Lamb. Let us daily dwell in the presence of the living, seeing God. So far from Isaac in type doing this, he not only got away from that well, but he settled down in Gerar.

The consequence of this heart-sin, we who know ourselves might easily infer. Once get away from God, and who can tell where we shall stop, unless grace keep and restore us? So Isaac in Gerar fails in the flesh in the very way that Abraham his father had failed before

him—he tells a lie to secure his quiet; as if this were an equivalent to the furnace with the presence of God. We too, or any of us, may prosper as to this world, whilst our conscience is ill at ease, or was at the commencement of our departure from the truth, and from Scripture principles. Of course, all this wealth which he acquired whilst out of Canaan is attributed to God, for God is good to all. But if we have to choose between the presence of God as distinguished from earthly blessing, all of us, I trust, would prefer the form r. And particularly in this dispensation of the Church, and of the heavenly call, it is a common thing to see men with very many earthly blessings, whilst yet they are in total ignorance of Himself who gives them. Such wil thank God for a meal who never thanked Him for the gift of His Son. Yea, more, even Christians in a declining state may exhibit an ardour in their business transactions such as they but little eventually display in the things of God. The world is winding round their hearts; "grey hairs are here and there upon them, and they know it not."

Then, as with Isaac as we see him here, such at these times exhibit themselves as very wilful. Providences may have a voice which yet they will not hear. The Abimelechs of the day may say to them, "Go from us," and they still reply in act, as Isaac did, by continuing "settled" where they ought not to be (verse 17). Scarcely will the bit and the bridle avail, where, if they were in the right path, the guidance of God's eye would be ample. So, again, we read here of contention taking place as to whose were certain wells that Isaac's servants had dug. With some readiness he surrendered them one after another, after some show of contention; because, as we shall see directly, he is not at ease in

conscience. It is impossible for a saint to pursue this world with the same alacrity and constancy that the unregenerate man exhibits. When off the divine ground of communion, he may strive in measure with a worldly man, but with the less inward ease as he is conscious of his false position. A bread-living is all that God allows his saints to seek for here. And this, with His own favour and smile, He will give them. But if they covet more of the former, more than proportionately they lose of the latter.

Hence, thirdly, we read in verse 23 that Isaac went *up* to Beersheba. This statement is in singular conjunction with the verse before, where, as if at perfect ease, he said, whilst yet in Gerar, "The Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land." Then if so, wherefore this sudden change of purpose, involving the loss of all these wells? Because what he, talking piously, had said with his lips, as if to quiet his uneasy spirit, his next action contradicted. He knew he was where he ought not to be. His resolve to depart appears to have been taken just at the time that everything appeared to invite him to remain. Many Christians, in their Martha-like bustle, and in their Demas-like declension, could easily give passages from their past experience which would form an apt commentary on all this. The verses do not require any explanation; we all know, probably, the evil of departure from communion in the desire of "other things," and our wretched state of soul, until we returned to our God.

And this interpretation of verse 23 is confirmed by the Lord's instant action in verse 24. On the very night of Isaac's return to Canaan, the Lord appears to him. No longer does He hide Himself, and address Isaac providentially through Abimelech; but He Himself says, "I am the God of Abraham thy father: fear

not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake." This is a very different blessing indeed from what we had read in verse 12. And oh! the loving-kindness of God, not to delay this restoring word; no, not for one day, probably not for an hour! And this is our God, who forgives us, and restores our souls.

Then we read of the altar and the tent, and *each in their due order;* whilst of the former we read not a word during Isaac's being settled down in Gerar. Now, too, we hear of a well, enjoyed as had not been the others with the presence of God. And, finally, no longer does Abimelech urge his departure from himself, but on the contrary, now he seeks after Isaac. Thus all readily falls into place, when we begin rightly with communion with God, and obedience to His revealed will. One blot we may notice in Isaac at this time, even as there are spots in the sun and slips in every Christian. He did not command his household, at least, Esau, in the matter of his marriage, as he ought to have done. And thereby he procures grief for himself and for his wife. For sin or negligence ever brings sorrow.

Chapter XXVII. Fourthly, in this chapter xxvii., we are taught that those who despise the grace and love of God will bitterly rue their scorn when their loss is irretrievable. God is not mocked; what a man soweth, that will he reap. If he sows to the flesh he will reap corruption. So we see here. In chap. xxv. 33, we have the commencement of such sowing; here we behold the speedy, the initial reaping; for some men's sins go beforehand to judgment. Even in this life they may feel some of the effects of their sin. At the same time there is forgiveness with God, that He may be feared.

Well therefore is it for him whose consequent sorrow leads to repentance of the sin that entailed it. True, Esau, though he wept, found no place for repentance and no forgiveness. But a little reflection will remove this difficulty. For what was the cause of his tears? Not *the sin* which he had committed in despising God's mercy, but *the loss* of the blessing which he had incurred.* Who does not eventually grieve at loss sustained? But is such grief, sorrow after a godly sort? No such thing. His was like that of Judas—remorse, not repentance (Matt. xxvii. 3, Greek). And though in this scene Esau acted more uprightly than any other who figures in it, still he had sown the wind, and he was reaping the whirlwind.

Then after Esau's vain efforts we can notice Isaac's. He was determined, if possible, to secure the blessing for his favourite. This is seen in his haste to bless him, as if he were already on his dying bed, whereas he lived over forty years after this time.† But all was without avail. God had purposed, and who could set aside that purpose? Rebecca's pet was Jacob. But neither her design nor Jacob's craft could hurry God. Truly Jacob got *a* blessing here at this time, but not *the* one—not such an one as, when wholly cast on grace, we find in chap. xxviii. 3, 4; as when the Lord appeared to him a homeless stranger for his guilt, and gave him that long string of promises and blessings, of which we find mention there in verses 13—15. All that Rebecca and he got through their not waiting patiently for God to

* Flevit quod perdidit, non quod vendidit.—*Augustine.*

† This blessing of Isaac's sons was in the year B.C. 1760. But Isaac lived until the year B.C. 1716 (see Gen. xxvv. 28). Even there the account of his death seems inserted anticipatively. For Isaac was only 150 years old when Joseph was born. But he lived 180 years.

interfere was that they were separated the one from the other, and never saw each other's face again. From Heb. xi. 20, where we read that "By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau," it would appear that he was led to pause in his endeavour to intercept the blessing for his favourite Esau, and heartily to ratify the bestowal of the greater blessing upon Jacob, which unintentionally, and against his own wish, he had pronounced upon him. Then the allusion in the passage in Hebrews will be of course to the moment when he discovered his mistake, and yet recognizing at length what was the will of God, instead of further attempts to oppose it, exclaimed, "Yea, and he shall be blessed." Setting aside his own inclinations, and shrinking from the brink of the precipice of wilfulness, which in his blind infatuation for Esau he had approached, he, triumphing over himself, acquiesces in the will of God. What a mercy it is, if at any time we have been determined to proceed to almost any lengths in carrying out that on which we have set our hearts, though yet against His will, God arrests us in our folly.

Grace does thus check erring saints when sometimes they have appeared madly bent upon going further and further in a wrong course. "The Lord turned and looked upon Peter." What would that Peter have done next and next, had it not been for that look of divine compassion?

It falls not within the design of these addresses to attempt an exposition of all that is contained in this chapter. My object the rather is to gather up the main lines of thought in each section, and to place each distinctly in view. These being well apprehended by any one, the various incidents and details of the narrative will be seen to more advantage as grouped all round the leading idea, and filling up perfectly the spaces in the inspired picture.

The Lord's Way with Jacob, the Typical Servant.

Genesis xxviii.—xxxv.

CHAPTER XXVIII. When I speak of Jacob as the typical servant, I by no means desire to imply that he was a pattern one. Quite the reverse. As we are all aware, much did he exhibit of craft, of distrust, and of self-will; and much, consequently, did he suffer in being broken in by his gracious God. But still, in outline or shadow, he largely represents the character of true service. Thus, for instance, after the typical son, Isaac, we next read of the typical servant, Jacob. But neither Isaac nor Jacob is once called a son of God. Therefore, likewise, it is not suggested that Jacob was in the highest sense a servant of God. Still the servant came forth from the son; yet the service was only typical, as was the sonship likewise.

But this is not all; only a certain period of Jacob's life is selected by the Spirit, in order, typically, to set forth service. For many years subsequently he is almost lost to view, though alive. The same had been the Spirit's style in the narrative of Isaac; that is to say, not much more of the history of either is given than is sufficient to illustrate in the one, sonship, and in the other, service. Now, Jacob's service we shall find in the following chapters to consist of two parts—

(A.) His absence from home whilst engaged in earning his two brides and his flock.

(B.) His progress homeward to Bethel, and guiding the family and flock thither.

Now as we saw, when considering Isaac's life, that there was one period in which he is rather a type of Christ than of us—to wit, in chapters xxii. to xxiv.—where he is beheld as an adult with his father Abraham yet alive; and, again, that in the other parts of his life traced before us, he (Isaac) is rather a type of us, the children; a like distinction may be easily observed in the case of Jacob. What I have termed above, Part One of Jacob's typical service, there surely may be seen the shadow of Christ's own work. On the other hand, in the very full account that succeeds, I mean, of his leading a family and a flock back to Bethel, there he rather resembles us. In the former part of his service—to wit, that with Laban—he appears to have been singularly faithful, as Hosea records (xii. 12). But, contrastedly, in the latter part of that service, very much of failure is he guilty of, even until he almost breaks down therein. Of course, I am speaking of him as a *servant*. As an individual saint, God could not give him up, nor did He. On the contrary, as we shall see in chap. xlvi., God quite broke him in, and made him obedient to His will. So, too, in chap. xlviii. 17. Likewise is it with us. Speaking generally, the Church, as set up by God to be His servant and His witness, is, as to manifestation, a wreck and a ruin. Because the Holy Ghost has been set aside, and grieved and quenched. For whilst Christ's work He Himself does immediately, without any instruments, the Holy Ghost is pleased to work mediately through under-shepherds and others, and wretchedly have they failed. Yet the Church, and

every believer as such, are perfectly safe (Acts xxvii. 44).

But, further, in the work of the mighty and uncreated Son of God, His service was complete, from whatever point of view it is regarded. Coming forth from God, He would stand up for all the rights of God; coming down to men, He would meet in grace all the wretchedness of men. He knew all that was required of Him; all this He could do; all this He delighted to do, and all He did. But in the case of us, little children, wayward and having much yet to learn, our service is fitful, piecemeal, and ofttimes accompanied by failure and by sin. Still, where sin abounded, grace has much more abounded. Can it be for this reason that we find him selected as the typical servant, who appears in Part Two of his service specially to have deserved to be set aside? For so then, again, this Jacob very much resembles us all who, indeed, are only sons or servants at all through infinite grace, which was brought to us by Him who is the divine One. I see in Scripture that sometimes the Lord upbraids His servants for their unbelief, or for their slowness to learn His mind; but yet without removing them from their place of service, and of their feebly following Him. Again, in other cases, where He has removed such from one service, He has given them instead some other mode of service more exalted and more self-emptying. The case of the disciples at His resurrection, or of Ananias hesitating to go to Paul, when the Lord bade him, are illustrations of the former (see Mark xvi. 14, 15; Acts ix. 13, 15); whilst Paul in prison, through his inattention to the Word of the Spirit to him not to go up to Jerusalem, and yet in that prison employed to write those epistles which have been such a source of joy to all saints; or, again, of Mark set

aside for awhile for his half-heartedness, and then inspired to track out in his gospel the path of the pattern Servant Himself; these are instances of the latter. And thus, these have had, through infinite grace, fuller opportunities afforded them of serving heartily, and with vaster service, somewhat more resembling His own. And hence, as the type of service which we have in Jacob becomes, where it is true in shadow, as in sonship, more like the Master's own; and where the type fails, as fail it is sure to do somewhere or other, when it is used to set forth His person and work; or, again, where the copy fails, as it does constantly in all of us, such failure itself serves to bring out into stronger relief the untiring, patient obedience of the perfect One—perfect in everything, and perfect in His service, too.

The hint that service must flow from sonship, according as we are invariably taught in the New Testament, naturally, and as we might expect, turns up here. Jacob, who sprung from Isaac, had to earn a wife, and to keep sheep (Hosea xii. 12). So at the beginning of the gospel of Mark, the gospel of the Servant, attention is called at the outset to His being the Son of God. And a magnificent quotation from the prophet Isaiah is then given to clench this matter. With us, also, the twofold motto, and in its due order must ever be, "Whose I am, and Whom I serve" (Acts xxvii. 23). Let us bear these things in mind as we briefly glance at these next chapters; so shall we obtain the main lesson which each is designed to convey to us.

To Jacob were accorded three special manifestations of the divine favour during the period of his typical service: one at the very beginning of that service, at the place which he most appropriately designated as Bethel; the next was at the beginning of the second

part of his typical service, when he was engaged in leading a family and a flock homewards; and the place where this manifestation of divine favour was accorded to him he, with equal aptness, felicitously termed Peniel; and then a third, when, after much delay, he arrived safely back again at Bethel.* For the entire journey from Padan-aram, onwards and homewards quite to Bethel, is regarded as one single journey in chap. xxxv. 9, however long he may have allowed himself to tarry at Succoth (chap. xxxiii. 17). Now these names—Bethel, signifying, of course, "the house of God," and Peniel "the face of God"—are immediately connected with the type which we have sought somewhat to draw out. For hence we learn that, ere we begin to serve God, we must have been to Bethel; in other words, we must ourselves form a part of the household of God. And then the other term Peniel impresses on us the important and slowly-learned lesson, that to enjoy the presence of God, which, as His servants, we need, we must be obedient children, doing even as He bids us (John xiv. 21-23). By that second vision, being Jacob's mercy whilst plodding along with his charge, there may be heard the gentle whisper to us, if we have the hearing ear, that it is not by jerks, or by emotional impulses, that we serve God and please Him, but by being found daily occupied in our respective spheres of service which He has assigned unto us, continuing without fretfulness at the post where He has put us, and gladly performing our work, unobtrusively and humbly. This is so contrary to the flesh; but it is

* I do not here add to the list of appearances of the Lord to Jacob, the vision at Beersheba in chap. xlvi., because it is of another character of teaching altogether, as we shall see presently.

God's way. "He who placed each star yonder in its position," we should be able to say, "has located me here, and here I stay till He removes me." For it is delightful to know we are where and at what He would have us to be. This each one ought to be fully conscious of. Then at length, when pilgrimage is ended, and obedience in suffering is finished, our final rest shall be under His eye, and in His house for ever (Ps. xli. 13; xxiii. 6). Already Christ, the divine Servant, has sat down in that uncreated glory; and thither, too, we shall in grace be brought (1 Peter v. 10). Peniel and Bethel shall be found together (John xvii. 24).

Again, if we know aught of Bethel mercy in putting us already among the sons of God, we shall feel our strangership here. Surely the sense of loneliness must have come painfully over Jacob as he gathered stones together for his pillow; but grace took him by surprise.

The four "beholds" which are found in the next verses are each of them most instructive. The first one occurs in reference to the wondrous Ladder which extended all the way from earth to heaven, and by which his attention was directed to the heart-cheering truth, that if through sin we have forfeited this world, and have come out from it through grace, yet are we beckoned to another and brighter world above, even unto heaven itself. The ancient name of Bethel was, as we are here informed, "Luz," *i.e.*, "separation." But separation of itself is of little or no value, unless it be separation unto God. How gracious of the Lord by His presence with Jacob, granted him at this time, to constrain him, as overpowered by God's loving-kindness, to change that name. In like manner with ourselves, never do we part from aught at His call but He far more than makes it up to us with His own smile.

The second "behold" looks right on to the very end, as, indeed, is the usual style of the Spirit in Scripture. For "if children, then heirs." "Begotten again to an inheritance" (1 Peter i. 3). Nothing between us and glory! So here the time when the heavens and the earth shall be united under one sceptre, held by a pierced hand—when both spheres shall be connected by one divine-human Centre; to wit, Christ our Way, and God our End;—this is the period here foreshadowed in this second "behold." For see the glance back to this identical scene in John i. 51.

Then the third "behold" proves the Lord's way to be one of free grace in that whilst Jacob, with all his scheming, got not *the* blessing in its fulness whilst at Isaac's couch in chap. xxvii.; here, without any effort whatever, and unexpectedly, that blessing is pronounced unto Jacob twice; first by Isaac, just ere he dismisses him from his home, and then it is largely expanded by the Lord Himself at this moment.* So likewise by no merit nor attainments do we come into favour, but merely because "so it seemed good in His sight."

The last of these four "beholds" adverts to the Lord's special presence with the typical servant during his service in Syria. To the fact of this divine presence with him there, we observe constant allusion made in the subsequent chapters, and notably over and over again in chap. xxxi. The same fact also explains the reason of Jacob's meeting with God's hosts upon his return from Laban's service (see chap. xxxii. 2). But Jacob, like ourselves, is slow to rise up to the ways of

* In the reference to this vision in chap. xxxv. 7, the language is in style like what we have met with in chap. xx. 13. There we read, "God, they caused me to wander" (Hebrew). And here likewise we have "God, they appeared" (Hebrew).

grace, and gives vent to those wretchedly unbelieving words in verses 20—22, with which this chapter closes. Though we may be quite aware that we are loved, and saved, and blest, yet, alas! how common it is for saints to be anxious beyond all measure as to their daily bread. We can trust Him readily with our souls, but scarcely with our daily concerns; whilst as to the former, we may have peace of *conscience*, as to the latter, how often are we needlessly agitated, lacking peace of *heart!* How few of us could, from experience of God's mercy, speak out so boldly as did Paul—"My God shall supply all your need," not according to your need, but "according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Meanwhile, as we, whilst absent from home, are painfully learning subjection, obedience, and true-hearted service, we may see every day the infidel Esaus allying themselves with the religious Ishmaelites, verse 9. "Mahalath" which is the name of the daughter of Ishmael that Esau now married, signifies in Hebrew, "disease." This same word is found in the inspired heading of Ps. liii. which describes the morally diseased state of the fool's heart. Hence it may be hinted that this daughter of religious Ishmael was herself an infidel. And this seems the more probable inasmuch as she is called Bashemath, or "pleasant smell" in xxxvi. 3. For the variation of the name cannot be without design in Scripture. Then the idea would be similiar to that which is suggested by chap. iii. of 2 Peter, wherein the infidel spirit of the last days follows the tracing of the worldly religious spirit described in 2 Peter, whilst as for those imbued with the one evil spirit or with the other, our time of sorrow is their time of merrymaking. Such may have their differences; still, they are but slight their hostility is reserved for those only who are Christ's.

CHAPTERS XXIX and XXX. When on the twenty-fourth chapter, we saw that the Bride is brought to Isaac by Eliezer "the strength of God" (Zech. iv. 6); whilst He, the once dead but risen Son, remains unseen in the Father's house. Here, conversely, the Servant-Son Himself comes forth to earn His Bride. The two together admirably set forth the two leading features in Christ's love of us. For there, yonder, as Son, He awaits His Bride to be brought to Him, and will at the end advance on the road to receive her to Himself, who here, as Servant, toiled hard and perfectly (represented by the number of years being "seven") to claim her righteously as His own. The two types combined set forth that she who is now being brought to Him is the purchase of His life's blood. Again, in Joseph the Ruler, we have the picture of the bridal pair united in marriage by the supreme potentate; ere that ruler's brethren after the flesh, come to bow down to him. Adam's reign was very brief; but the rule over all is to be restored. At the commencement of Genesis we have human rule instituted of God; at the close of the book we see that His purpose has not been frustrated, for here is human rule again righteously and beneficently administered. Conjoining these THREE types, and we then learn that this rule shall be of the Son that died, and was dead three days, who is risen, who is at present hidden in the Father's house (chaps. xxii.—xxiv.); that this Ruler is He who with sore travail bought us (chap. xxix.), and to Whom on the throne we are finally to be united (chap. xli. 45). Thus the type of the bride of Adam finds its completeness at the other end of the narrative; whilst in between these two ends, in Rebecca and Rachel, we have the Bride led home, and the Bride purchased. The more advanced

aspect of the truth is to be expected to be placed first in Scripture. Thus in Hebrews ii. we read of Christ's dying in order to bring many sons to glory, before we hear a word of His dying to deliver them from bondage, death, the fear of death, and from Satan. It is important to recognize this order of the Spirit of God. Then further from the FOUR types to wit, Adam, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, and each one with his respective bride, there remains not one main line of truth about "Christ and the Church," which is without its foreshadow here. If Jacob earns his bride through much toil and sorrow, Isaac's story whispers that that soul-sorrow was in the death on Mount Moriah. Adam's again represents that the bride is taken from His side whilst He sleeps a "deep sleep." Then the bride brought to the Bridegroom and married to Him, He like as Joseph the ruler with His bride for a companion commences His reign, some time previous to His Jewish brethren seeking His favour, or repenting of their causeless enmity towards Him. Then, lastly, by Enoch, Noah, and Abraham, the other three representative men in this book, we all discern the two callings, now to heaven and next to earth, and that the response to each call is made by faith, as exemplified in him who is the father of each of the two seeds, compared to the stars of heaven and the sand on the sea-shore. All which naturally prepares us to hear of two brides, Rachel and Leah, given to the Servant from the land remote from his native home.

Jacob of course first meets his future wife at a well's mouth, even as the bondwoman and her son had there been cast out. On the significance of this feature in the type I have already remarked when on chap. xxiv. Its occurrence as well here as there goes far to prove that its presence is not undesigned. One important touch

is added here to what is to be found there. Jacob has first to roll the stone from the well's mouth. This incident is in beautiful keeping with the whole colouring in the picture. For the Lord Jesus as the Servant come forth into a strange land in quest of His bride, must needs first remove the hindrances that sin has set up, ere life more abundantly in resurrection could be given to us.

Once more, Israel was first married to the Lord, albeit the Church was most loved, and though, too, His love to her was prior to His love of Israel. For Israel's blessing is stated to have been prepared "*from* the foundation of the world" (Matt. xxv. 34, Rev. xiii. 8); but the church was chosen by the Father, and given unto Him ere the world began. This difference of period as to "the time of love," regards of course the place of blessing to which each party respectively is called. Since our fatherland and home are to a glory far beyond where the sun ever shone, no wonder that God's choice, and Christ's love of us, should be before time altogether. Besides which, never did Israel in her palmiest days of yore, never *will* she, never *can* she in any such yet to come, hear language from the Lord at all commensurate with this: "As My Father hath loved me, so have I loved you;" and, "Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved me."

As to the type in Leah's first four sons, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah; then of her two sons born after the children of the handmaids, Issachar and Zebulon; also to the handmaid's children themselves, Dan, Gad, Asher, and Naphtali; and, lastly, to the same type in Rachel's children, Joseph and Benjamin, some clue may be found to be traced in the table of Israel's history in chap. xlix. And as it is to be in the earth-

lies with Israel, so a like arrangement, it would seem, will obtain in the heavenlies. I mean that whilst at present *seven* is God's perfect number, three the number for God, and four for earth, as in Rev. vii. 1, the total signifying the connection of the divine dealings with the world at present; so, when God has quite won His way, and comes forth in the plenitude of His glory, then the heavens and the earth will each be blessed, according as is shadowed forth in the larger number, twelve; that is, four, not added to, but multiplied by three; or, indeed, in one Scripture depicturing heaven's joy, twenty-four (Rev. iv. and v.)

To the fact of two brides for the Lord, the heavenly and the earthly, the objection has been made that "then one would be for the parlour and the other for the hall." The answer is, in that day, heaven and earth will each be so full of the glory, that neither sphere will resemble "the hall." That the glory of the celestial should differ from and exceed the glory of the terrestrial, is no wonder. And the type of Asenath, the bride of the ruler, at the end of Genesis, with his brethren at his feet, proves that where the heavenly and the earthly are both represented, the heavenly one is the Bride.

Chapter XXXI. to XXXII. 2. This chapter seems specially designed to show us how God delights to be with His servants in all their appointed toil. Be their work what it may which He has assigned unto them, however difficult or however humble, they may reckon, if they will, on His presence in it. It is a strange thing, in a world apostate from God, for God to be obeyed, and served, and loved. But the great Servant has shown us all what a blessed thing it is to serve

Him, and in what manner likewise this is to be done. And we who are God's sons now are, with more or less of spiritual intelligence, gradually apprehending the grace of God in calling us to serve Him, in giving each of us our work for Him to fulfil, in causing us to enjoy His smile whilst engaged in it, and even in promising us rewards hereafter corresponding with the faithfulness of our service now. The crowns of which He makes mention must never be disparaged. Ignorance alone can pretend to count these as of little value, seeing that they will be Christ's public testimonials of His approbation of our endeavours at pleasing Him in a world that knew Him not. Those rewards, placed by Himself upon our brow, have an eternal character (1 Peter v. 4). The service which He looks for at our hands is, in brief, identification with Him here in His rejection, looking at the world in the light of His cross, and at each one of His people as so loved by Him, seeing Him in every one of them, and therefore serving them, and not ourselves; and thus, by dying as He died, to bear much fruit (John xi. 24). The religious world's mode of service is to seek after influence and position, and so to bless inferiors; the Christian's is, by taking a lower place to wash the feet of others. "Whoever," says the Lord, "wishes to be *great* among you (not *over* you), let him be your SERVANT; and whoever wishes to be first among you, let him be your SLAVE" (see Matt. xx. 26, Greek.) In like manner, pastoral work, too, which the Lord specially calls and fits some to undertake, is constantly spoken of as "*among*" the sheep, and not *over* them (1 Cor. ii. 6; iii. 16; Acts xiii. 1). The peculiar work of these pastors—not of *the* pastor; the Lord Himself is THE Pastor, and nowhere in Scripture is any other than He recognized as such—is to feed and to

lead the flock, though still taking a lower place as servants, and urging the Church into a higher one. Feeding and guiding the flock are often conjoined in the Word (as in Rev. vii. 17; John xxi., Greek; Heb. xiii.) Still, some who cannot teach, and evidently are not given by the Lord as teachers, have yet gifts of rule (1 Tim. v. 17). And these it is incumbent on such to exercise, though still *among* the flock. As for the credentials of their authority, they are in the hearts and consciences of those whom they serve. And in the assembly of God there must be scope for the exercise of all that which is divine in its origin. Where there is self-exaltation, as is often the case where there is open ministry, there the flesh should be judged, for the flesh is no better in a dozen than in one. The Church was never designed to be the theatre for the display of man, but of the grace of God. No man has any right to do aught there. The right is the Lord's to minister through whom He will. On the other hand, when the eye of the flock rests on some gifted teacher, then is that teacher placed in a false position, it may be, not by his own seeking, but because souls like to have some one whom they can *see* to lean upon, rather than on Him in whose name they profess to be gathered together (see that solemn Scripture, 1 John ii., last half of the chapter). It is irksome for man to depend on God.

Say you, "But this renders service, and particularly pastoral service, very difficult, and, from a worldly point of view, very thankless"? I might answer, Yes; of all service, pastoral work, where Scripturally performed, is the most arduous; but look at the future reward (1 Peter v.) But now I prefer to point your attention to this chapter, and to ask you to note how constantly God is spoken of as with Jacob whilst in his thankless

shepherd work, and done, too, away from home (see, for instance, verses 3, 5, 9, 11, 13, 24, 29, 42). And this should be our consolation when the thought comes over us as to how unworthy we are, and how wretched we were when grace found us. Therein we resemble Jacob. At the outset he had had to flee from Esau, whom he had wronged; but yet, with untiring diligence, he had served away from home faithfully. Such seems to be the gist of that passage already cited in Hosea xii. 12, where the prophet contrasts the conduct of their parent Jacob with that of his degenerate descendants of the prophet's day. For God delights to make our very falls useful to us, and as opportunities for the further display of His grace. And so we find that here God could talk to him about such minutiæ in his shepherd work as we find Him doing in verse 12. Likewise, again, God could and did tell Jacob, when he had served long enough with Laban. For though we may be sometimes incredulous as to His watchful love, and forget that He allows us to be encompassed with fiery trial, He measures with accuracy the time we are therein, and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able.

Then came the command, in due time, "Return unto the land of thy fathers, and to thy kindred, and I will be with thee" (verse 3); and Jacob, we gladly perceive, moved not until that command came. Nor did he tarry long afterwards (verses 13—17). But in his obedience to the word from the Lord, the second part of the type is commenced; that is to say, his progress homewards. Yet not alone, but guiding the family and the flock there also. And on and on, though with faltering steps, he proceeds, until ultimately he reaches Bethel. When he first sets out, Laban, the worldly man, is his terror; and when he has advanced far on the road he is still

oppressed with dread of Esau. For the Lord's servants may be sure that the world will view with dislike all genuine separation from it; and much more, even when they have come out, must they reckon on perils through encounters with false brethren. But what we have recorded here was written for our admonition; and we perceive how the Lord, in a more providential manner, interposed to preserve him from much of the opposition of the former; and accorded him that most gladdening vision of Peniel to encourage his heart unto the latter. And here we find that Jacob could himself acknowledge that all the mercy in preserving him from the hostility of Laban was extended to him by God, because that God was in covenant with him as the God of his father, Abraham (verse 42). Yea, and this was so manifest, that Laban himself was constrained to acknowledge it (verse 29); even as many are heard to do now-a-days, and more feel this in their hearts. The chief difference between these two men comes out at the close of their last interview; when Laban, speaking freely, betrays his Chaldean tongue, whilst Jacob, at the same time, utters Hebrew (verse 47). For the servant of God inhales the atmosphere of heaven; thither tend his thoughts and hope. To the end of the way here he is a stranger, and increasingly, too, to its language, schemes, and *push;* to its delights, its politics, and its religions.

We know God as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and consequently as our God and Father in Him. He is now *for us*, openly on our side. Then, next, He is God in us by His Spirit. And then, when we obey, and serve, and please Him, we even find, as Jacob found in his twenty years in a foreign land, that He is God with us; and much more than Jacob

found, for He who is with us is our own God and Father. Observe that it is at the end of most of the Epistles, where we read that the God of peace shall be with us. As if, to enjoy His presence, we should heed well His instructions. He wants our service indeed; but better still, He is pleased to desire our companionship. But this is only possible in His own light (1 John i.) Yet to this are we called, even now, whilst yet away from home as Jacob. For no place can shut out God. All our service should begin with God, and be continued in communion with Him. Such, indeed, was the Lord's own way of service, save only, of course, during those terrible hours of darkness on the cross. Even there and then, when God forsook Him for a while, He maintained His stedfast confidence in Him and in His love. And we have no curse, and no wrath to bear, as then He had. Therefore let us work under His eye, and with our ear opened, and circumcised, and anointed. Singularly, this was the part of the body which was first anointed in the case of Aaron and his sons (Lev. viii. 24). Some now-a-days appear as if they would prefer to have their foot anointed first; to run ere they are sent; to do something or other, as a substitute for simple, lowly obedience. But to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams. Such are in too great a hurry to be at work, ere they themselves are established in His love. Note God's own beautiful order: first, He causes us, as prodigals welcomed home, to sit at His table, and to hear Him say, "Let us be merry" (Luke xv.). There is not a word here of hastening the returned son to work. Time enough for service when once the lesson has been learned well, that "the joy of the Lord is (our) strength."

This passage is closed with the first two verses of chap. xxxii., in which we have it narrated that the host of God met Jacob at Mahanaim. This was in Gilead, on the eastern side of Jordan. The Lord had promised him that He would be with him in all places where he was going, and bring him again to the land which he was then leaving (chap. xxviii. 15). And the Lord had kept His word; angelic hosts, "two" (see margin), as if one on each side of him (see 1 Kings xxii. 19), these he was permitted at length to see, that he might learn the care that had been taken of him whilst away from the land of promise. Would that we, too, fully confided in His care, who has now sent forth, not "two hosts," but His angels "all," even though they be "thousand thousands" to minister for them who are about to inherit salvation, and who have the charge laid on them to "keep us in all our ways" (Heb. i. 13; Dan. vii. 10; Ps. xci. 11). For the Lord has taken us out of the world, and has caused us to know His love; and then He has sent us back awhile into that world as heavenly saints, that as such we may serve Him upon earth. Compare verse 16 with 18 of John xvii. We are not alone, any more than He Himself was in the days of His flesh (John xvi. 32). And surely the account of this angelic vision here, as well as that of the vision of God which follows it in chap. xxxii., should encourage us to reckon upon God, and upon marked manifestations of His love, as we seek to go on patiently at our work for God. Our path, if we go on with Him, will wax brighter and brighter (Prov. iv. 18); our last days should be our brightest. Look at the glowing words of Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, in view of the goal at last (2 Tim iv. 6—8). I speak not of the path of our Master, all of which, from end

to end, was irradiated with glory, and where all was perfection. Yet even He is heard to utter the note of triumph oftener as His course nears its close (John xii. 28—31, xvi. 33, and notably xix. 30). And if Jacob's service somewhat lacked this happy feature, then, as we come now to observe, this was owing to his own unbelief and wilfulness. God was unchanged towards him. God loved him; and His love is ever unto the end.

Chapter XXXII. 3 to XXXIII. 16. We have now to look at the way of the Lord, when at His bidding Jacob proceeded on his journey homewards, not alone, but as a father and a shepherd. And here we have remarked, he speedily begins to break down. Whether it is easier to reckon on God during times of open hostility to our setting out, than when our further advance is retarded by some obstruction in our path, and whether one is more prone to be cast down at difficulties, starting up in this way, it may be, from the religious than from the irreligious, certain it is that Jacob, who had acquitted himself so well with Laban, now acts quite unlike he had done in his former achievements. It is possible to rest on the memory of past victories, and so to cease to be on our guard. If this be so with us, then may we be drawn on and down into modes of self-help, and subterfuges quite unworthy of those who have God on their side. Then the rapidity with which the fall, as here, is made into gross unbelief is terrible. But this is not all. When in the impending sore trial, and in which Jacob demeaned himself so unworthily, he was delivered from, then soon, alas! he falls again in another direction; his unbelief takes another turn. For next he attempts to nestle himself very snugly at Succoth, thereby acting contrary to the heavenly calling (Heb. xi. 9).

For he rears for himself a pleasant homestead, with booths for his cattle, and in this manner continues, though apparently with an uneasy conscience, as we shall see presently. Hence we learn that the servant of God, in his path of advance towards home and the kingdom for which he suffers, and in his leading others in that path, is beset with temptation on the right hand and on the left. Then, as to the one temptation, he may possibly not carry himself in a manner worthy of one who has God with him, but may cringe, and compromise, and flatter, where he ought to be ready and bold as a lion. Or, on the other hand, he may be tempted to settle down in worldly ease and sloth, ere yet his pilgrimage has ended to that place whither God, "the God of Bethel," has called him (chap. xxxi. 13; see further on, chap. xxxv.). For as all of us, I trust, know, God's first call of us involves everything in it. Bethel is *sure*, eventually, to be followed by Peniel. If we are, indeed, of the family of God, we must be brought home to God and set before His face for ever. Only it should be our ambition that this we should enjoy by faith, even now. See how these two, Bethel and Peniel, are combined in sentiment in Ps. xxvii. 4—8. Anyhow, not by attainment, but by grace, shall we, because "we are now the sons of God," presently "see Him as He is." The inheritance, all of it, we shall yet obtain; but the earnest thereof is for present strength.

Accordingly, since Jacob erred, now in the one direction and then in the other, God spake to Jacob in two several ways. First, there was the vision at Peniel, to encourage him to go straight on; but subsequently, for his failure as to seeking worldly ease, there came "judgment," "Dinah," accompanied with much loss. But let us follow the narrative. First, Jacob sends messengers

to Esau. Undoubtedly, this action was owing to his terror at his having to encounter his brother whom he had wronged, and therefore he thought it prudent to propitiate him at a distance. The message itself is abject and unbecoming; yet it was not by any means so abject in its tone as, even after the vision at Peniel, was the language which he uttered to Esau's face (chap. xxxiii. 10). But the message failed in the effect intended, and probably produced the reverse. Word is brought back to him that Esau is approaching him with a band of four hundred men, as if to sweep him and his from off the face of the earth. This result of that first slip might have been sufficient to admonish him that he had acted in an unbelieving manner. And who of us does not know what it is to be thwarted in some object, when we have trusted in men, instead of in the living God?

Next, he drops upon his knees, which had been well had he continued thus. We, too, know what it is to look up to God for help, when we have failed in every other resource; and wonderful it is that God will interpose for us, when we thus only give Him the leavings of our confidence. Yea, despite the evil issue of his message, anon he returns to the same wretched way of unbelief. There is a certain freedom from the fear of man, and a boldness of attitude towards him, which being in the presence of God is sure to give us (see 1 Kings xviii. 15). On the one hand, if our hope is placed on man, we shall hang down our heads for shame before God; but, on the other, if our eye be on God, we shall be bold before men (Dan iii. 16). But Jacob here is all for cringing and fawning upon his brother; he prepares a magnificent present for him and then gives vent to the thought of his heart. "I will appease

him with the present that goeth before me, and afterwards I will see his face; peradventure he will accept of me." These words seem to be midway in the descending scale of degradation between his less cringing tone in verses 4 and 5, and his ungrateful and ungodly language in chap. xxxiii. 10. As if, notwithstanding the very gracious interposition of the Lord, as found at Peniel, in between these two utterances of Jacob, his terror of his brother went on increasing, though yet, through God's unwearied love, needlessly. For, albeit his unbelief, his deliverance was complete, as well as that vision of God had for a while been consoling. But alas! our flesh is vile to the end. Any mending or improvement of it is impossible. There is some parallel to this part of the history in 2 Cor. xii., where we find that after a man in Christ had been caught up to the third heavens, and then to paradise, he yet needed and got a thorn in the flesh, "lest he should be exalted above measure."

The appearance of the Lord to Jacob at this juncture was evidently designed to turn his eye in the right direction. Jacob had spoken of seeing Esau's face; God gives him to see His. How beautiful and perfect is this action! Jacob was depending on his cleverness in surprising Esau in the arrangement and largeness of his present. God, in His wrestling with him, teaches him that he should lean with his entire weight upon Him. At the beginning of the contest, the victory was permitted by God to incline to neither party (verse 25), signifying the pains that God was taking with him to bring him to a sense of where his real help was. Then, presently, He touches the hollow of Jacob's thigh. Now the effect of this divine touch would be that whereas previously Jacob was standing by his own strength and

upon his own feet, then his weight would be necessarily thrown upon the Being who wrestled with him, and thus in Jacob's arms did Omnipotence allow itself to be held fast. What a gracious lesson, and how tender the mode of its inculcation! "He had power over the Angel, and prevailed" (Hosea xii. 4). Now is his name changed from Jacob to Israel, as marking an era in his spiritual lifetime. He is spoken of as a prince having power, and prevailing with God and with men. And the conviction pierces even the hard heart of Jacob that he had beheld God face to face, and that his life was preserved. Nothing of all this way in God's guaranteeing his security, and in admitting him into such intimacy, had Jacob been at all prepared for. He had been for surprising Esau; God had anticipated and surprised him in giving him the consciousness that His infinite love had made him a prince with God. The weakness of his flesh—the thigh out of joint, and which probably he carried with him unto the day of his death—would have been cheaply bought if it had always availed as a reminder of the grace of Peniel! It is still the same, even now; frequently does God combine these two in those whom He loves. It is for their spiritual profit that He should do so. How much more truth, in these last days, has been brought to light from His Word, and how much more has our joy been deepened in consequence! But, alas! the pride of our hearts has often seized upon this greater knowledge, insomuch that we have been exalted above measure; and it has led us into superciliousness and harsh judgment of other brethren. But how is this? Ah, if we have had the abundance of the revelations, yet, maybe, we have lacked the thorn in the flesh and the thigh out of joint. Therefore, let those thank God, to whom the one has

not been given without the other. By dying, we live; when we are weak, then are we strong (compare 2 Cor. i. 9, and iv. 8—11). God would have us to be wholly cast upon Himself. But how slow are we to learn this, even when in both ways—by revelations to our spirits of His grace, on the one hand, and by writing death upon all our fleshly might upon the other—He would press home this salutary lesson.

Jacob holds, as he says, the amen of his God in the hand of his faith. "My life is preserved," he joyfully exclaims. Then how does he demean himself as Esau approaches? By bowing himself seven times, and by causing all his family to bow themselves to Esau too! And when Esau, rendered harmless, not by his present, but by the God that loves Jacob, enquires as to the drove which he had met and at first declines its acceptance, Jacob replies, "If now I have found grace in thy sight, then receive my present at my hand, for therefore have I seen thy face, as though I had seen the face of God, and thou wast pleased with me." What a wretched return for Peniel! What base cringing to a mortal, and addressing his brother here several times as his lord! Alas! here we have a picture of the perverse froward ness in us all who are His servants, and whom He would have to lean upon Himself alone. Then how clear, how persistent, how uncompromising our testimony, and how simple our lives. Men would wonder where the secret of our strength lay. But if we do not walk in the Spirit, if we are little with God, no wonder if we act little before men. Oh! to abide in Him!

There is one touch added here, as to Jacob's servant-shepherd character, which is far too valuable to be passed over in silence. He knew how to lead on the cattle softly according as they and the children were able

to endure. He took care lest, over-driving them one day, all the flock should die. And this hint we obtain in the inspired picture of service and of shepherd work. Well would it be if the under-shepherds, each and all, pondered duly Jacob's word. But whilst some will not move at all, others impulsively hasten on after that which not seldom turns out to be a will-o'-the-wisp, if not an actual mistake, and they return wounded and broken to the place whence they set out. This would have been avoided, if each step of the way had been carefully felt, and severally taken with God. They take a plunge into some new Ism, and judge all others to be half-hearted, who do not take precisely the same plunge. Then presently, finding out their error, and that all is not gold that glitters, they come tumbling out again. Then such proceed to impugn every atom of advanced truth which in their heads they had learned; and despise the others, who when themselves go quite back, neither can follow them in their retrograde course.

Chapter XXXIII. 17, XXXIV. Here it appears we have the converse side of Jacob's naughtiness, the other side of his tendency to failure, and consequently the chastisement that came upon him from his loving God. But the rod which God uses to correct His erring saints with, invariably points to the sin which has brought it upon them. Hence, by what quickly ensued after Jacob's action in chap. xxxiii. 17, we may not only be sure that he had sinned, but further, by his nest being so thoroughly stirred up, we may perceive wherein it was that he had sinned. As certainly as effect follows cause, so does the disturbance in his household in chap. xxxiv., and which made Jacob to groan so heavily as he does in verse 30, naturally through the mercy of God, result

from his settling himself down so comfortably as he did at Succoth, as if Succoth had been identical with Bethel. But God teaches him the difference, and that he had not yet come to the rest of which He had spoken to him. Therefore, in clear allusion to this failure of Jacob here, when he had been rendered thoroughly uneasy in his pause on the route, He bids him "Arise *go up* to Bethel and *settle* there" (ch. xxxv. 1. Heb.) But these two carnal though opposite proclivities of his, the one displayed in his servile fear and flattery of his brother, and now the other, in his endeavour to settle down whilst yet he was on pilgrimage, correspond with the varieties of temptation to which God's servants may be subjected at different periods in their lifetime. In their earlier days they may seek in unrighteous methods to curry favour with those who can help them, or to propitiate those who might, humanly speaking, harm them; and then again later on, when their day declines, they may desire somewhat to retire from the din and turmoil of active service, and to ensconce themselves in pleasant quiet.

Here we find Jacob building a house at Succoth, with booths for his cattle. And then, as if unquiet in conscience as to what he had done, he appears to act precisely as his father had done before him—first making himself comfortable at a place, and then suddenly leaving it (chap. xxvi. 17—24). So next he passes on to Shalem, where he buys a parcel of a field. True, he erects an altar, but upon this God impliedly gives us His judgment when, adverting to it in that verse just quoted, directing him to "settle at Bethel," He adds, "and build an altar *there*." For it is of no avail to attempt to sanctify disobedience by prayer, though sometimes God's children attempt this impossibility. Such may cover their trangressions from themselves, or from

others, but God is not deceived (Prov. xvi. 2). You may have heard some speak in this style when defending aught which they have done, and yet which was glaringly inconsistent with their profession: "Oh, I have made it a matter of prayer!"

However, all this course of folly by Jacob influenced not His pure judgment who "weighs the path of the just" (Isa. xxvi. 7). The account of what befell Dinah (="Judgment"), and himself too, through his suffering child, and then the murder of the Shechemites through his sons, Simeon and Levi,* caused Jacob, who evidently throughout his life was a timid man, to feel that in that neighbourhood he could remain no longer. He feared lest the tribes around him should conspire together and slay him and his. Nor are the cases even now rare to behold, when saints have sought to make for themselves a snug resting-place on this side of the grave, of God's interposition in some or other remarkable manner, whereby bosom friends, or the property and accumulated store on which the heart had secretly leaned, have been withdrawn from them by Him at a stroke, awing sometimes the very onlookers. For He loves us too well ever to consent that we should have our portion here, and to leave us to our nest undisturbed. No; by tender or by sore dealings He will quite bend down, and ultimately subdue our stubborn wills, and conform us to His

* Jacob refers to this period on his dying bed in chap. xlix. 7, in language portraying how deeply his spirit had been moved by their deed of blood. Then judgment having begun thus at the house of God, presently the Shechemites, too, for the sin of Hamor with Dinah, are judged too (Psa. lx. 6; cviii. 7). In Judges ix. there is murder again at Shechem, which place was where the Lord went to in search of one to bless and to save (John iv.) And then, too, Simeon and Levi, who together imbrued their hands in blood, will apart repent (Zech. xii. 13).

own holy and blessed will. Ah! better anyhow now to be chastened and corrected, than finally to be condemned by Him with the world. This latter He cannot do. He cannot give us up, abandoning us to ourselves (Hosea xi. 7—9). Therefore the other, in mercy, He will continue to do "unto the end" (John xiii.)

Chapter XXXV. In tracing through the previous chapters the path along which Jacob was led, I have necessarily somewhat anticipated this closing picture. Here we have the goal reached whither, by the loving hand of God, he had been patiently conducted. In looking down the chapter we find the word Bethel occurs seven times. We may profitably group our remarks round the places where it is found.

It is mentioned first in God's command to Jacob to go up to Bethel, and settle there, and "build an altar *there*." The express direction that the altar is to be there is certainly important, inasmuch as Jacob refers to it in his announcement to his household as to where he purposes going. He properly leaves the strange gods and earrings, which his sons had taken from the Shechemites, buried under an oak, ere he departs from the place of his discomfiture. Assuredly the word of the Lord has come with power unto him. All incumbrances to obedience he would leave in the place where he had been half-hearted, or rather double-minded. How remarkable that idols and earrings should be here conjoined! His leaving all these under an oak there contrasts favourably with the conduct of the tribes at a later period at the same place. When Joshua was about to die, he assembled them at Shechem, and implored them once and again to put away their strange gods which were among them. But he implored them in

vain, and was fain to be content with burying a great stone under an oak instead of their gods (Josh. xxiv. 14, 23, 26). Possibly this action of his was in allusion to Jacob's at this time. And then he and his household obediently quit the place to go to Bethel. The case of men going "up to Bethel" was also in Samuel's time an evidence that God was with Israel (1 Sam. x. 3). And accordingly here we read of a gracious interposition of God in defending them from those who might in vengeance have assailed them, so that "none pursued after the sons of Jacob" (verse 5).

And now he comes to "Luz—that is, Bethel." Here Luz (separation) again is mentioned (compare chap. xlviii. 3). To begin with and to end with, these must be combined. Yea, separation invariably precedes union. An union to be real, must be an union according to God's Word and in holiness. And then at last Jacob reaches Bethel again! Home with God at last! Brought safely back whence God had sent him forth. And now God appears to him again. Our path of service ends, of course, where it commences, with God in grace calling us to Himself. It is impossible to mount higher than where we have been already called in Christ. All our failures in walk and in work are tumbles from the place where God by His call has placed us, which is that we should be before Him in His love as His sons. And faithful is He that calleth us, who also will *do*. The call from the beginning of our course unto the end continues and is one. He who once called light out of darkness is carrying on His work in us from day to day. As His call continues the shining of the light; so, likewise, does it His work in us (2 Cor. iv. 6). Only when the archangel's shout, in consummation of this call, is heard by us. shall we perfectly, fully know its

vast import. For the sheep know the Shepherd's voice, and gladly shall we mount to Him, to dwell in the house of the Lord for ever; yea, to be His temple which with the presence of His glory He will fill for ever. "For ever with the Lord. Amen, so let it be."

Some may experience a difficulty in accepting the statement that Jacob's home was at Bethel, inasmuch as, towards the close of the chapter, our patriarch journeys onwards to "the tower of Edar," or, "tower of the flock," and thence farther to Hebron, where Isaac was then dwelling (see verses 21 and 27). But upon a little reflection we shall all, I think, perceive that the mention of these stages after Bethel had been reached, by no means militates against the above view, but, indeed, much strengthens it. For, as we are carefully reminded in the prophets, "the first," or tip-top dominion, is to "come to this same tower of Edar," or, "of the flock" (see Micah iv. 8). And again, Hebron is the place whence Joseph, the typical ruler, departed on his way to the viceregal throne (see chap. xxxvii. 14). In other words, the service ends in rule. "If we suffer"—for true service will entail suffering, as the path of the Lord has demonstrated to us—"if we suffer, we shall also reign." Again, David's course as a king commenced at Hebron (see 2 Sam. ii. 1). Thus in this very chapter xxxv. is terminated the account of typical service, and in the next chapter the story of rule is begun. Now to Bethel Jacob had to "go up" (ver. 1). But Joseph departed from "the valley of Hebron." What I point to is that, to be the sons of God, to be at home with God in His presence, to be ourselves the very living temple of God is our very highest blessing. To have our works looked at by the Lord, and to be rewarded accordingly, can only be in another sphere.

We all know that the judgment-seat of Christ follows, and does not precede, our being received to Himself. As now, we are first sons and next servants; so then, we shall be first sons and next, under Christ, rulers. And here, Jacob's progress from Bethel to the tower of Edar and to Hebron, teaches in type the same lesson. Our service ends in rule.

In the next place, Jacob having arrived at Bethel, builds, as he had been bidden, an altar there, and calls it El-bethel. This altar seems somehow connected, yet contrasted, with the altar that he had built at Shechem. That he had named "El, elohe—Israel," which is, being interpreted, "God, the God of me, Israel," or "God, the God of the prince with God"; but this other altar's name denotes, "God of the house of God." The former term might suggest to us that at Shechem, Jacob was consoling himself with past manifestations of divine favour. Or, at least, it hints that he was living on the blessed fact that God was his God. But this latter term rather brings before us the more self-emptying side of the same truth that he himself belonged to God. That is to say, the name of the earlier altar witnessed, "God is mine"; but that of the latter one, "I am God's."* For the more His glory strikes our eye, the humbler we shall lie. Surely by the selection of this other word at this time by Jacob a glimpse is afforded us of his state of soul, proving that he had grown in the knowledge of the Lord.

The next verses inform us that Deborah, Rebekah's

* So, likewise, in Solomon's Song, we read, in chap. ii. 16, "My beloved is mine, and I am His." But in chap. vi. 3, these two clauses are inverted in their order. Then in chap vii. 10 we read, "I am my beloved's," without the additional clause at all. Thus the same sort of growth is seen here as in Jacob's experience.

nurse, died, and was buried at Bethel. Of the death of Sarah, the wife of Abraham, we have already read in chap. xxiii.; of the death of Rachel we read in a verse a little lower down in this very chapter (verse 19); and of the burial of Leah we have a passing word by Jacob in chap. xlix. 31; but of the death of Rebekah, the beloved wife of Isaac, there is no account in Scripture. But we are instructed to construe the very silence of Scripture as itself significant. Thus Melchisedek's parentage, we are informed, is purposely concealed, in order that in some respects, as a shadow, he might resemble the Son of God, who had no human father nor divine mother (see Heb. vii. 3). Doubtless therefore a lesson is to be drawn from the omission of all reference to the death of Rebekah. And most strangely we have here the death of her nurse recorded, but not her own. The lesson to be derived we need not go far to seek, if we have followed the line of teaching as traced in preceding chapters. For the Church, in her character as the wife of the risen Son, never dies. The *Servant's* office may expire when all rule, and all authority, and all power have been put down, and therefore the Church's rule terminate in the same respect as His.* But not so with her status as the wife of the last Adam, and as the Bride of the Lamb, the Bride of the risen Son. Never! To all eternity she is His Bride still; for ever and for ever her beauty, derived from Himself, is unfading and incorruptible as His own.†

But now we come, in the next place, to observe that

* In one sense His kingdom is for a thousand years, during which all evil is being dealt with in judgment, and all opposing rule put down. Then, in another and far more glorious sense, this throne of God will be established on the final suppression of and victory over sin, which is shut up in hell for ever.

† See my Lectures on the Revelation, vol. ii., pp. 213, 214.

Jacob, having been separated or delivered from his previous half-heartedness, and from his attempt to settle down ere yet he had reached home, and having erected the altar there at Bethel, according as he had been enjoined to do, and himself now more abased and self-emptied, God again at once appears to him. And as if to impress upon our attention the fact that the entire journey of Jacob from Laban the Syrian, until he came to Bethel, was one single one only, however it might have been broken, as at Succoth and Peniel, therefore the language here used is remarkably precise upon this point. For thus it is written: "God appeared unto Jacob again *when he came out of Padan-aram*, and blessed him." Now his new name Israel is a second time given him by God, his old name being quite set aside. Thus the blessing of Peniel and that of Bethel are now combined. There is here a parallelism between God's dealings with Jacob and His dealings with us. By the sight of Him we obtain a new nature, even eternal life. By beholding in faith the glory of the Lord we are being changed into the same image by the Spirit of the Lord, in such a manner as only He could effect. But then, when we have reached home, and at length see Him as He is, we shall be made like Him. Our very bodies will be "changed" also, so that the flesh will trouble us no more. Like Him inside and outside, and all together, His Bride, yea, and His body too, of which He is the Head as the Christ, is His for ever. Oh, what a prospect lies before us! Then, as God had repeated to him his new name of Israel, so Jacob finds that he anew has occasion to call that same place Bethel (verse 15). And we too, in His time, shall fully know the object of His call, for we "shall know even as also we are known."

Next we are told that Jacob and his family journey from Bethel towards Ephrath, or Ephratah, where Rachel died in giving birth to Benjamin. And here, again, Jacob appears to more advantage than Rachel, being in a more spiritual frame of mind. For whilst she calls her child Benoni, "son of my sorrow," Jacob names him Benjamin, "son of the right hand." The one is the language of nature, the other that of faith. Her death at this moment reminds us of her impatient cry when, in chap. xxx. 1, we hear her exclaiming, "Give me children, or else I die!" Here we see that, her desire being obtained, *so* she dies. Nor is this all. Subsequently Jeremiah and Matthew poetically figure her as weeping for her children, and refusing to be comforted, because they are not (Jer. xxxi. 15; Matt. i. 18). May we not learn hence that it is well to submit our desires to the will of God, and to acquiesce therein, whatever that will may be.

Upon verse 21, about Jacob spreading his tent beyond the tower of Edar, we have already heard from Micah, the connexion of this place with the kingdom. So that the whole of the inspired narrative of Jacob's advance when once he quits Bethel, resembles typically a royal progress. First he moves on towards Bethlehem Ephratah, next to the tower of the flock and presently reaches Hebron. This therefore seems all designed to teach us that the servant who treads in the footsteps of the Lord, shall reign with Him (see John xii. 26). But now the typical ruler himself is about to appear. But verse 22, with its commentary by the Spirit in xlix. 4, makes it perfectly plain that the first-born after the flesh is not the one who is destined to become ruler, according to the mind of God. He who is in God's purpose about to be brought forth as such, is tempted, at a later

period, in a manner not wholly unlike to that wherein the first-born now fails.

The remaining verses of this chapter are supplemental to the entire narrative of Jacob's service and cause us to feel that we are passing from that subject to the next. Also we see Isaac disappearing from the scene, even though as we here learn, he lived to a hundred and eighty years of age, whilst yet he was only a hundred and fifty when Joseph was born. Hence, remarkably, he lived till the very year that Joseph, the ruler, sat down on the vice-regal throne. How perfect is all this. The ruler appearing in his might and glory after the son and servant have been before us ; and the sonship and service are as it were merged in the rule. Surely we can all see that this chapter is not only to be regarded as the historical close of Jacob's service, but as typifying the rest, and introducing the rule of the servants and sons of God, when once their toil and pilgrimage are ended. May I not therefore add, what this chapter seems specially to mark, that there is an order, a wondrous and perfect order, in the Word of God, aye in its historic portions too, even where the chronological order is not strictly adhered to. There is, I repeat, an order, but it is God's own, which God's children should carefully reflect upon.

The Lord's Way with Joseph, the Typical Ruler.

Section I.

Edom in power, whilst the family of this coming ruler are strangers in Canaan.

Genesis xxxvi. to l.

CHAPTERS XXXVI. to XXXVII. 1, inclusive. Here we have a long section of forty-four verses. We cannot admit that no lessons for our instruction are to be found herein. Already, in chap. xxxv., we have observed that the Spirit has been leading us on towards the subject of rule. Is it to be wondered at that He begins by tracing, at great length, the succession of rule in the family of Esau? In several previous chapters we have been taught a similar way of our God. The best He is wont to keep until the last. The wicked must first have their day. Thus the line of Cain is traced in chap. iv.; but of Seth's descendants, the professing sons of God, in chap. v. Again, in chap. x., the sons of Japhet, and of Ham, are mentioned before those of Shem, from whom, according to the flesh, came Messiah. Ishmael's descendants are named ere the account of Isaac's, in chap. xxv. 12. So, likewise, here we see Esau's family great in the earth, whilst the rule according to God, is not yet brought forth. Saul must precede David. In this light, ver. 31 is a great help in

the survey of this chapter. Ere now, in chap. xxxii. 6, we have seen Esau to be so great a man, as to be a sheikh over four hundred men. Here his descendants have become greater still; some of these are dukes, and others are kings; and all these "before there reigned any king over the children of Israel." Yet Jacob, that is Israel, had the promise of kings, which Esau had not. Yet here, strangely, we learn that many kings had descended from Esau, ere one vestige of royalty appeared in Israel. And a most pithy ending to this section is the first verse of chap. xxxvii., which properly ought to be the last verse of chap. xxxvi. For we can at once perceive that the second verse of chap. xxxvii. is the true commencement of the history of Joseph. And the first word of the first verse, may as well be rendered, "but." Then the contrast is very striking to behold; for not only are there dukes and kings in Edom very many, ere one such potentate appears in Israel, but, on the contrary, of Jacob, the record here is that he merely "dwells in the land wherein his father was a stranger," even though that land be "the land of Canaan." And, further, by a comparison of Exod. xv. 15, with Num. xx. 14, we find another contrast, to wit, that the time of the change from dukes to kings, by Edom, took place during the period that Israel remained in the wilderness!

But notwithstanding all this rapid rise and grandeur, Edom is to perish, ere Israel, under its King of glory, becomes the first of the nations of the earth. The prophets teem with passages predicting the thoroughness of Edom's destruction; let two suffice, Is. lxiii. 1—6; Obad. 1—16. So passes away the glory of the world! Its supreme prince and god is Satan (John xiv. 30; 2 Cor. iv. 4)! Of its pomp, its politics, its might, and its religion, he is the supreme head. The rule of kings was set up by

God Himself; were this still in divine order, a Jew would be over all. Of old, his throne is called by the Holy Ghost, "the throne of Jehovah" (1 Chron. xxix. 23). This language of inspiration should be well pondered. From the point of view in which it places us, we should understand how upside down, and down-side up, is everything here at present. For Israel and Judah sinned, and their kings were carried away into captivity. Nebuchadnezzar is the first Gentile ruler recognized of God; hence the later prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, date their prophecies from the times of the Gentile kings. For though a remnant of the Jews returned, they were subject to foreign monarchs. God did not undo what He had done in handing over for a while the sceptre unto Gentile hands. Nebuchadnezzar and his successors should have taken the kingdom with a burdened heart, even as the glory had left Zion reluctantly (Ezek. viii.). But the rule went on deteriorating. This is represented in Daniel's image of the head of gold, of the breast of silver, of the belly and thighs of brass, and of the legs of iron and clay. Nebuchadnezzar was appointed, in a certain sense, by God, and his rule was an absolute monarchy, and his eye should have been fixed upward for direction from the living God. But the pride and autocracy of Babylon's kings were succeeded by the oligarchy of Persia. For the king of Persia, as we read in the book of Esther, had seven counsellors associated with him in his rule. Then next, successful military men wrested the kingdom from Persia, and obtained it for Greece. As to Rome, which eventually subdued Greece, her rule is still inferior, being more and more mixed with the democratic element, "the clay." And thus the rule becomes increasingly weak, and, in conse-

quence, increasingly debased. It receives its inspiration not from above—from God—but from beneath; to wit, from the populace to be ruled. And when the true King at length came, Jew and Gentile both desired as quickly as possible to get rid of Him. Hence for all this great contrariety of the world from the mind of heaven, the world's rule is only secure whilst the King Messiah accepts His rejection. Besides, no one now rules the entire old Roman world. The government of Christendom is in the hands of many kings. And even their little thrones will all and each, after the rapture of the Church to heaven, be upset by the opening of the sixth seal. For thus will the way be made open for bolder impiety in the ruler, just as Belshazzar's kingdom was taken by Darius. The former, who made use of the holy vessels for an unholy purpose, had to succumb to him who prohibited prayer to God. And thus "the beast," as is his name in the Revelation—the emperor of the revived Roman empire, as he will be regarded by the world, with his ten subordinate kings, elected at the same time as himself by universal suffrage, will first sweep away every vestige of the adulterated Christianity that the kings of our day patronize, and next try their hand at persecuting the Jews, with the view of establishing the sole worship of the emperor everywhere. Then will appear the King of the Jews with all His mighty angels in flaming fire taking vengeance.

Meanwhile, the Christian's part is to remember that he is not of the world. He is dead, indeed, and risen with Christ. He is to pray for the king of the land in which he sojourns as a stranger, and to be subject, for conscience' sake, to his laws. It is possible that the command of his Lord Jesus Christ may clash with the law of the king of the land through which he is pass-

ing. For instance, his LORD has said, swear not AT ALL." The same Being has also said, "Defraud not." Imagine that He had revealed His will concerning oaths of all kinds simply in this style: "Swear not." Then as "Defraud not," is His prohibition against all unfair dealing at any time, so surely "Swear not," would likewise be equally peremptory against all oaths. But suppose that He had chosen to express His will more strongly thus: "Defraud not AT ALL." This language would seem to preclude all false glosses that might otherwise have been made, as to the lawfulness of cheating occasionally, under special circumstances. But men's natural religion has rendered this emphatic style on the eighth commandment unnecessary. But He has said, "Swear not AT ALL." Again His Lord has commanded him: "Resist not evil." His Lord had enemies when on earth, but He refused to fight (John xix. 36). What He did instead was to suffer them to kill Him. Thus his Lord not only by precept, but by example, has expressed to His followers His will. But never in the Word is a Christian encouraged once to be disobedient. Where he is compelled to disobey the law of the king of the land wherein he is a resurrection-stranger, this is only because a higher authority still he recognizes as paramount. Peter did not say to the chief priests, "We will disobey you;" his language is more precise—"We obey God." In all cases we must obey. And here, as we cannot obey both God and you, "we must obey God rather than" you (Acts ii. 29). At the same time, we ought to be thankful that our God has fixed the bounds of our habitation, has given us to live under such a mild rule as obtains in England. So should we pray for the peace of the land until He come to take us bodily out of it.

One other reflection we may make ere we pass from this chapter. Here we perceive that there were many generations of rulers, and therefore of those ruled, ere Israel, the earthly people of God, were brought to the front. And so, too, as we are aware, there have been more since Israel for a while has been set aside. But yet here we have a list of all those dukes and kings of old given us by the Spirit of God; and therefore we may realize how easily an accurate list could be furnished by anyone, were he inspired to do this, of all the rulers of every country, and of all the generations of the ruled which have existed in these last ages. Yea, not only all of them, but all their actions, words, and motives He is fully cognizant of. And most certainly all of these He will in due time bring forth into the full glare of day. More than this, we are told by the Lord Jesus that in the judgment the light accorded to one generation and to another will be contrasted, together with the responsive action of the several souls in each. Thus the people of Tyre and Sidon will fare better in that day than those of Chorazin and Bethsaida. Sodom's judgment will not be so sore as that of Capernaum (Matt. xi.) The men of Nineveh and the Queen of Sheba will rise up in that judgment with the men of Christ's own day, and will condemn them. What a scene before the great white throne! But then it is the Omniscient who sits thereon, and His judgment is the "eternal judgment" (Matt. xii. 41, 42).

The Lord's Way with Joseph, the Typical Ruler.

Section II.

He who is to rule typically, according to God, must first learn to obey. The descent, after the flesh, of the true King.

Genesis xxxvii.—xxxix.

CHAPTERS XXXVII. to XXXIX. The avenues of temptation are twofold. Satan may seek to get us to disobey God, either by deploying on the soul the power of fear or the solicitation of pleasure. As Augustine has expressed this, the temptation may assail us either "*per januam timoris*," or "*per januam voluptatis*"—either through the door of fear, or through the door of pleasure. Moses might have been called and regarded as the son of Pharaoh's daughter; then he would have been separated from the suffering people of God. Later on, he might have allowed Pharaoh's power and frown to awe him. But by faith he overcame in the one mode of trial and in the other (Heb. xi. 24, with 27). Likewise did Joseph in each way come forth a victor also. It has pleased the Spirit of God to place in the forefront of his history that apparently at first sight trifling incident recorded in verse 2: "Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren, and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the

sons of Zilpah, his father's wives, and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report." No doubt this is intended to show that thus early in life he was enabled by grace to stand fire. So here we see the turning point in his life. He would not by his silence connive at evil. Nay, more, whilst man's motto is, "Out of two evils choose the less," such was not his course. He *abhorred* that which was evil. A youth of his years, among brethren much older than himself, might have been expected to be afraid of the hostility of those with whom he daily was thrown in contact, with whom in great part he was left alone, and therefore if he did not with some scruple countenance their lawless acts, at least, to hold his tongue at what he could not prevent. But though he must have been aware that such an action would embitter his life among his brethren, and entail upon himself much suffering constantly, he made his father acquainted with their evil deeds whatever they were. This would not be the ordinary way with boys of tender years among their companions; it was contrary to nature, it was the effect of grace. We must of course understand that this determination on the part of Joseph to be on the side of right, of truth, and of God, sprung, as a matter of fact, from God's own work in him: the consequence of God's free choice of him. If the path of Joseph was towards the typical rule for God, this was in virtue of God's own sovereign will. For God's way is first to choose, and to assign a place, and next to qualify. And His choice, generally speaking, is not of the noble, the mighty, or the prudent. For then flesh might appear to have somewhat to glory in before God. Man, indeed, very properly requires qualification as a first requisite, for the obvious reason that man cannot qualify him

whom he might otherwise select. Not however by Joseph's own settled purpose did he reach the utmost pinnacle of earthly glory under Pharaoh, but by God's own sovereign will. And he therefore so soon began to lead him along the path of holiness, and of separation from evil as His way thereto. In this manner He was preparing for Himself the man whom presently He would bring forth to rule and to bless the world. Also, "The child is father to the man." He who now refused complicity with the sin of others, subsequently stood firm when by Potiphar's wife he was himself solicited to sin. He who feared God rather than his brethren in the one case, ten years later said, "How shall I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" The living God was so before his soul that fear of others was powerless to drag him into association with evil in the one case; and likewise, yea most probably more so, that same God he still kept before him when the oft-repeated solicitation from Potiphar's wife was presented to him, and thus was he preserved in the other. "The word of the Lord tried him" (Ps. cv. 19).

Early therefore had he to make his choice, whether God should be his fear, his God or no. Ten years later he had again deliberately to repeat that choice. Doubtless in the interim many occasions would occur to test those principles which he had adopted, or rather the life which He had begotten in him. Nor is it an unfair surmise that the youth would usually be on his guard against sin, preserved by the God that loved him. But still these two extreme trials are selected by the inspired writer to be inserted in the narrative. In early youth fear of others tried its power over him, and under circumstances most calculated to prove too much for his faith. Then in the hey-day of life, and when the passions

of youth are strong, was he again tempted, not as before, but in the opposite direction, and that by one who was his mistress. Thus there were crises in his lifetime, as there are crises in the lives of us all. These test us. By them are we moulded in the one way of truth, or into some or other of the many forms and characters of wickedness. For actions repeated make practice; and practice persisted in leads to habit; and habits form the character; and character eventually becomes eternal. Now we sow; then we reap. And either men become increasingly devilish, or else, having been begotten of Him as His children, that divine nature grows in them as they believe. To them that receive Him, to them He gives power to become the sons of God. And thus, on the one hand, suitable inhabitants for hell, and companions for Satan; or, on the other hand, living, growing, and established sons of God are being won from this planet. What a tremendous reality, in view of this alternative process, is one's daily life!

Visions of future greatness soon begin to be vouchsafed to the God-fearing youth; whilst conversely the dungeon looms uncomfortably near the stedfast man of faith. We know all of us that God has seen good to combine these two in His dealings with us. Inside the vail our hope is fixed, and the Comforter gladdens our hearts by revealing to us the glory of Him who is our head, and showing us the things which are to come. These glimpses and this earnest of the bright prospect before us are for the purpose of strengthening us to be faithful and decided for God in the day of trial. The crown there and the cross here must never be dissociated by us. Thank God our cross is very different to that which was His. No curse, no wrath, no sin are in our cup, as was in that which was presented to His lips. But

still in an evil world that hates Him, if we will indeed be on His side, we must be content to suffer with Him.

The persistency with which even a youth like Joseph set himself resolutely to obey is remarkable. His prompt obedience to his father, when he desired to send him to inquire after his brethren's welfare, and his continued search after them, although he must have been well aware of their hatred towards him, are brought out in chap. xxxvii. 12—17. An excuse, and a good one, if he had desired this, in order to avoid his brethren, was furnished him by their having departed from Shechem, whither he had been sent to them. Without real earnestness of purpose he would not have heard whither they had gone, nor have gone further after them. So, too, with Potiphar's wife. Her solicitation of him appears to have been made many times, for which she would have abundant and peculiar opportunities. And these would render steadfastness on his part much more arduous than ever. But whether from *his own brethren* whom he was serving on the one hand, or from the *world*, represented by Potiphar's wife, on the other, he preferred to suffer in righteousness than to sin. The one for his love returned hate, and sold him to strangers; the other for his very purity charged him falsely. So, too, nowadays, under some more or less specious pretence, the taking up the cross may be shirked, may be avoided by us, if we have a mind to this. And even when we have begun well, for instance, by being immersed, as believers in Christ, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, we may, unless on our guard, pause there. How many are sunk in worldliness, or halt in their obedience, when they have taken this step. Properly, this is only the first step in a long path of suffering with Him, of which, if we could but

reach it, a baptism of blood is the last (see Rev. iii. 10, where death means by blood; Heb. xii. 4; also Luke xii. 50, where the Lord conjoins in glance the two ends of His service). But how is it that we all, every one, fare here so much better, so very differently, to the way in which He fared? Is the world changed? Or is it that we, like Peter, follow Him only afar off, that we are so little like Him? But anything like full identification with Him in His sufferings is only reached by a long-continued course of struggling against the flesh within us, that delights in ease, and against the world, and specially the religious world, whose frown or reproach is dreaded by so many (read Phil. iii.) Ofttimes the various Scriptures which were evidently, from the context, intended by the Spirit to console us under our sufferings for Christ's sake, because we experience so little of those sufferings, are appropriated by ourselves, and quoted as comfort for others, when merely suffering from natural sorrow, or from causes to which all, believers or unbelievers, are alike liable to suffer. I say not that we do wrong in seeking comfort at such times from those passages; only let us not miss their obvious and main purport. Advisedly, I refrain from quoting any of these passages; those will be enough which occur to your own minds. Alas, that only in this subordinate sense can we apply them to our own cases! Alas, that the suffering for being quite out from the paths of evil we are so little acquainted with! The more we trim in our obedience, the less shall we enjoy those Scriptures, and realize their force. The more we are mixed up with sin, or halt in our pathway of separation, of obedience, and of testimony for Him, the more uneasy will be our consciences at the first, until, by shutting our eyes wilfully against the light given unto us, it is

withdrawn, and we fail to see our foes; until even, it may be, we come, as many others have done ere now, to scorn the path of separation altogether, and to speak ill of those who dare to tread it.

But "God was with Joseph." To this Stephen, another suffering witness to the truth, calls attention in his address to the infuriated Jews in Acts vii. 9. And this fact the scene at the close of chap. xxxvii. suggests. His brethren's purpose of killing him is changed, so that they sell him to the Midianites, who conduct him to Egypt, and pass him on to Potiphar. And this alteration of their original design, by God, in His providence, leading the Midianites to pass where his brethren and Joseph were at the nick of time, and then their disposal of him to the Egyptians, is looked at from this very point of view by Joseph himself, when at last he makes himself known to his brethren in chap. xlv. "Now, therefore," says he, "be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for *God* did send me before you to preserve life. . . . So now it was not you that sent me hither, but God." He looks back at all that had befallen him from a divine rather than from a human standpoint. He discerns God's hand, and recognizes His design in His allowing their wicked deed in part to be accomplished, and in His suffering himself to pass ten weary years in Potiphar's house. For God's trial of faith is a real and ofttimes a long-continued thing. And when Potiphar's wife had procured his imprisonment, then again, as we read in chap. xxxix. 21, "The Lord was with Joseph, and showed him mercy;" also in ver. 23, "The Lord was with him," though yet from the dungeon he was not delivered for three more painful years. Such is the divine mode of bringing us up from the wilderness; not to shield us from suffering

with Christ, quite the contrary; but to vouchsafe us His presence in those sufferings. Here is why we know so little of the consolation, even because we are conversant so little really with cross-bearing. Listen to the language of one who knew well both what suffering with Christ was, and, withal, what consolation in Christ was to be enjoyed too: "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort, who comforted us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ. And whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer: or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope of you is stedfast, knowing that *as* ye are partakers of the sufferings, *so* shall ye be also of the consolation" (see 2 Cor. i.)

But it is time that our attention was directed to the peculiar place of the narrative contained in chap. xxxviii., as it is inserted in between the respective accounts detailing the two forms of suffering to which Joseph was exposed. The object of the chapter generally we easily perceive. For it traces a step or two further in the line of descent of Messiah after the flesh, for "Judah begat Phares of Thamar." But why is the continuity of the history interrupted, and this descent thus parenthetically inserted? Doubtless we may infer, in part, to rebuke the arrogance of the Jews who boast of their ancestry, and of their long line of kings. For though Christ, even as to His flesh, was Himself through the

miraculous operation of the Spirit, infinitely pure;* His moral glory ever shining out, notwithstanding this His amazing condescension in becoming man, as a bright sunbeam on a filthy pool; yet here we see that those from whom He thus sprung were anything rather than immaculate. Again, there also may be a hint here of the likelihood of Abraham's seed intermarrying with Canaanites, and thus to show cause why Joseph in being delivered to the Egyptians, and ultimately, when he rose to power sending for all his family to Egypt, was that thus God was taking care that they might be kept a separated people. Certainly this what we have here is an actual picture of what the Jews' condition is during the true Joseph's rejection by them. For so the prophets; witness Jer. iii. 1, and Mal. ii. 11. Still, undoubtedly the main purpose served by the insertion just here of the history contained in this chapter, is that inasmuch as the typical ruler, according to God, was becoming gradually manifested by his sufferings for righteousness' sake; so here, God taking occasion now to reveal more as to the genealogy of the real Ruler, prevents our eye from being riveted upon the shadow that it may be directed onwards unto Him who is figured thereby. For He whose perforated hand shall yet grasp and wield earth's sceptre righteously, was to spring out from Judah (chap. xlix. 10). And then we, too, being identified with him, suffer with Him during His time of rejection, not only for righteousness, but also for *His* sake. So, whilst He

* The Greek word used for His holiness in Heb. vii. 26 is a very strong one—*ὅσιος*, which is much more than *ἅγιος*. Yet note that regarding the only women who appear in Matthew's list, in chap. i., there is something bad about each one of them. They are the Thamar of this chapter;—Rahab, the harlot; Ruth, the Gentile; and Uriah's wife.

says, "Blessed are *they* who are persecuted for righteousness sake," in the next verse He continues and shows what is rather the character of our calling. For says He, "Blessed are *ye* when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for My sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad," etc. And that God is with us when we thus suffer for and with Him, may we each and all of us know even in increasing measure (John xiv. 23; xv. 10).

But now that many features of the true Ruler may be already discerned in Joseph his shadow is at once evident, on even a cursory survey of these opening chapters of his life. Thus (1) Christ is God's own well-beloved Son; (2) He was hated of His brethren; (3) yet He, for the joy set before Him, did more than merely adventure His life in their behalf; for (4) both He and His Father knew perfectly well the issue of His search after His brethren, and yet He came, because both His Father's and His own heart yearned over them and over us; (5) and as soon as He begins to suffer in rejection, He does not dream, indeed, as to future greatness, for to Him the future is bared, but He works miracles, which symbolically foreshadow His kingdom, and utters parables as to its mode of introduction; (6) the very sun, and moon, and stars, shall yet all be witnesses and contributors to His glory;* (7) also the Lord, too, continued His search after His brethren—He found them at last, not, indeed, in Dothan, but in their sins, when He shed His blood upon the cross, Luke x. 34, Matt. viii. 3; (8) He likewise was sold into the hands of strangers; (9) especially in Joseph's brethren's cruelty towards their brother, the Holy Ghost reminds us of Christ in chap. xlix. 23; (10)

* See my Lectures on Revelation, chap. xii.

once more, with Christ, too, was God present in a manner most intimate and full, save upon the cross (John viii. 29). And as we proceed in our study of the history, we shall find many more similarities between Him the substance, and Joseph His shadow.

The Lord's Way with Joseph, the Typical Ruler.

Section III.

Since all is light in the presence of God, so there is His judgment seen by him who for obedience is in the depths of this world's rejection and degradation.

Genesis xl. to xli. 33.

CHAPTERS XL. to XLI. 33. This entire section teaches us the reverse lesson of that contained in Judges xvi. 21. With God is the Fountain of Life; and the Life is the Light of men; and the Light shines in the darkness; but the darkness grasps it not. Still, in His light, the children of the light can see light; but God's judgment differs utterly from men's. That which is high up amongst men is abomination in the sight of God; conversely, that which God delights in, man has no heart for. Once the world had to choose between the Son of the living God, and a robber called Barabbas (*i.e.*, son of the father). Is it to be wondered at that the world loved its own, and that God proved by Christ's resurrection and enthronement at His own right hand, that He loved His own. I have said that the world once had thus to choose; but, indeed, the choice by the world is being repeated every day. For still the Holy Ghost, Christ's represen-

tative, is being rejected by the little Antichrists. And when the man of sin is revealed at the close of this dispensation, the whole world will welcome him with plaudits and admiration (Rev. xiii. 3). But God so stands to His delight in Christ, that daily for that One's sake He welcomes sinners vile, as His children dear unto His heart. And soon He will gather together into that uncreated light every one of these beloved ones, and, seeing them in Christ, cause them to sit down on thrones, and to be crowned in His presence.

Thus His and the world's light and judgment are essentially and diametrically at variance; nor is it hard to assign a reason for this contrariety. The world has got away from God; hence it esteems darkness to be light, and light to be darkness. And then, further, those high up in the world are hindered, by the glare of day, from the view of heaven's glory. As to that world yonder, they are in total darkness, especially since as yet that light can only at present be discerned by the telescope of faith. But those down in a pit behold the starry expanse when those high up see not anything. If we obey God, we shall be sure to encounter the world's hate and scorn. But there, in that place of rejection, wonders of glory burst upon our gaze. There we enjoy God's secret; for it is with those who fear Him; and Joseph had shown that he feared Him.

He was now a separated man. First, he had been separated and disowned by his brethren; then he had been accused and cast forth by the world; then he found God to be with him. There, in a dungeon, he discerns things in their true light. So to John was given the revelation of Jesus Christ, whilst in the isle that is called Patmos, and probably a toiling daily slave in the mines there. First, he had leaned his head on

the Son's bosom, and there he had obtained strength to confess His name. Daniel, too, was the man greatly beloved; to him were granted visions of God. Yet never let us forget how his prophecies are prefaced in chap. i., by the story which, doubtless, his own modesty would have led him to omit, but which the Spirit of God caused to be put in the front, that we might know that he to whom it was given to see the glory of the world, as in chap. ii., and heaven's judgment thereon, as in chap. vii., refused to partake of the king of Babylon's dainties.

On the other hand, some, as Samson on the lap of Delilah, have their eyes put out. His was the secret of Nazarite separation unto God: as long as he kept that secret he was valiant against the Philistines, and did exploits; but when his secret was wrung from him by the Philistines, who represent, in type, the religious world in the possession of the ground belonging to the people of God, then was he blinded. Only to think of a band of men, mostly unregenerate, claiming for themselves the title of the Church of God! And, alas! Samson's is by no means a solitary instance of one's delight in reposing on the world's lap, ending in a judicial blindness. On the contrary, the Holy Ghost takes care to warn us that a like compliance with temptation, and a like downward path into evil, and entailing necessarily a like blindness, may be the experience of a class of cases at the present day. For such an one who is not adding unto his faith, bravery, knowledge, etc., but who lacks these things, He pronounces to be blind, as of one wilfully shutting his eyes, and forgetting that he was once purged of his old sins (2 Pet. i. 9); and not to advance in the knowledge of God, and in realization of the apostasy all around us,

is to recede. He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow; but he who wishes to shirk suffering *for* Christ, and *with* Him, will readily find excuses for so shrinking from a path of sorrow. Then what he once did see, he comes presently to wink at, and even to consent to; so does he abandon his Nazariteship. As far as a saint can, he forgets his heavenly calling, and his separation unto God; and if you show him anything, evidently to a child contrary to the written Word, his curt reply will be, "I do not see it." But we are not to be judged by the light which we have, but by the light which was within our reach, and which possibly we refused (John xix. 11). Our want of light obviously cannot change that which is written. Our safe way is, whilst there is time, to buy at any price the oil of purification (Matt. xxv., with Esther ii. 12). He that hath clean hands shall wax stronger and stronger. He that will do His will, shall know of the doctrine. "He that followeth Me," said Christ, "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John viii. 12).

The Lord Jesus is the true Nazarite. The secret, and the full and unruffled communion between His Father and Himself, were the elements of His life, and the spring of all His actions. See, for instance, John xi. 41—43. And we who are His saints are associated with Him; separated from the world, separated unto God (John xvii. 14—19; Heb. ii. 11). The former without the latter would be mere mockery; the latter without the former is vain pretension and hypocrisy (Hosea ix. 7; Amos v. 14—20). The Lord's way is ever in the combination of these two. Now we are His saints; but to sanctify, invariably, in Scripture, signifies to separate, whether it be a pot or a vessel, a day or a man. The saints, therefore, are God's separated ones;

they have been separated, according to the purpose of God, by the blood of Christ, by the call of God (Rom. i. 7), and by His sovereign grace in quickening and in sealing them. In principle, they all and each, even the youngest, or the most carnal, "have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 16). Not one child of God is there, but he must know from the Word and from the Spirit within him, far more truly as to the actual condition of things around him, and as to the real hope set before the saint, than all the world's wise men unitedly could guess. Though even they, some of them, have some vague and dim apprehensions of the things which are coming on the earth. But some abide in Christ more than others. And whilst all God's own are aware of the world's impending doom, and of God's present work, and of what He is about to do in general; still a few more heavenly-minded ones—that is to say, having the mind of heaven more fully shed upon their souls—learn all these things far more distinctly, possessing God's own judgment, as well of things here as of things there. And such as are full of His Spirit can declare His present ways, opening up His Word with power and clearness unto others.

Now Joseph, by separation and by obedience, had, as he grew in years, waxed stronger and more heavenly-minded; therefore the better could he see things from a divine standpoint. So, when the secrets of God were in due time revealed to His servant, as subsequently they were also unto Daniel and unto John, and as previously had been the case with Enoch (Jude 13), then and thus could he prophesy. And in the former instance, he was enabled to tell out the mind of God in regard to two individual men; and in the latter, he could also unfold God's will as to what He was about

Himself to do towards the world at large. To the chief butler, and to the chief baker, their dreams seemingly so very alike, he could unravel, distinguishing things that differed. There is no indecision in his style, nor hesitation in his language. As if robed in celestial ermine, he pronounced sentence, so tremendously different in the one case from the other, on the two prisoners standing before him; and of this varied judgment, one of them thus spake afterwards to Pharaoh, as if his very tone and look had thrilled him in his soul: "And it came to pass, as he interpreted unto us, so it was; me he restored to mine office, and him he hanged."

Here then is God's picture of what rule must be to be in accordance with His mind. The eye of the ruler must be upward towards Himself; his ear open, to receive His communications. So the ruler, according to this kind of tracing, must be one who has first learned to obey; in the case of others, of those who shall reign by and by in His time, they have to learn obedience who themselves erst were disobedient. And in the case of our Lord Jesus, He, too, began to learn it, when once He had assumed servant-form (Phil. ii.). From eternity, He was *above* it; from our birth we were *beneath* it; but He and we have all to learn it, and learn it, too, by suffering. Of Him, as of a man born to rule, it is thus written: "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord, and shall make Him of quick *scent* in the fear of the Lord, so that He shall not judge after the sight of His eyes, neither reprove

after the hearing of His ears . . . And righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins, and faithfulness the girdle of His reins" (Isa. xi. 1—5). And to this agree the last words of David in his portraiture of the same Ruler: "The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. And He shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth." It is evident, from David's own description, that he himself was not the man. And Joseph likewise failed, at the very moment, too, of his unfolding the fate of his fellow-prisoners. For to the chief butler, he presented his petition for his aid in bringing him forth out of the prison. This surely was unworthy of one who had God so manifestly on his side, and was conscious of it. Why could he not wait, and trust still in the living God?

One is worthy, and He alone! One, we know, answers perfectly the description given of Him by the two inspired witnesses cited above. Thus when He on earth was judged by some, but not according to truth, so He reproved them: "Judge not according to sight, but judge righteous judgment" (John vii. 24, Greek). Whilst as for Himself, albeit He came not to judge the world, but to save it; yet ever and anon occasions of course turned up, by which it was manifested how easy it was for Him to solve difficulties, remove perplexities, brush aside specious sophistries, distinguish between cases that actually differed, and mete out to all their relative degrees of sin and of judgment. It was not His way to condemn the unjust: rather, He made them to condemn themselves. See for instance Luke xix. 22. Again, it was his wont, such was His perfect discernment, to reply to the state of heart of each questioner, rather than merely to his question. To one who pointedly asked his

judgment as to the division of an inheritance between himself and his brother, He first replied, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" and then He added a warning against covetousness, not for him that had all of it, but for him who only desired some part. Even before Pilate, He weighed over the proportion of guilt of him that had delivered Him up, compared with Pilate's own sin. Oh! if thus He acted when in His humiliation, what infinite light and purity of judgment will He not display when He shall come in the glory of His Father! And even now, He is "*ready* to judge the quick and the dead." All the knotty points and questions raised in the world, and even among His own saints, through their not abiding in His presence, and in His light reading His Word, He will quickly, by reference to His Father's honour, and to His own person, immediately disentangle. Now Satan is allowed to work, insomuch that light is ofttimes put for darkness, and darkness for light. Yea, Satan Himself is transformed as an angel of light; but all this, at most, avails only whilst the King, the coming Melchisedek, has not arrived.

Melchisedek! king of righteousness—a priest-king! Such a one, save in type, has never yet been seen. Prophet-priests and prophet-kings there have been, but not a priest-king. What is the peculiar thought here? As a priest, He had to give up all. Speaking practically, His priesthood commences at His resurrection (Heb. v.—viii.) But yet He had to provide a sacrifice. Hence, we may say that He began to prepare Himself for priestly work when He was lifted up on the cross; that is to say, when quite separated from the earth. Just as, during His service on earth, He had not where to lay His head, so at His death He had not where to place His foot. Now He is indeed king, though as yet on

earth He reigns not. But He will sit as a priest upon His throne. And we, too, taking our cue from Himself, are priest-kings under Him. We, therefore, who are personally to reign with Him are separated from this world now.

Then on that cross judgment He still displays. Of the two thieves hanging near to Him, and who had been probably equally guilty, He took the one to Paradise, He left the other. No depth of ignominy into which, in grace, He descended, could hide His glory. Surely that thief forgiven will be a trophy of His matchless power, even in the hour of His greatest weakness. He had read that little piece of God's Word, "This is Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews," and it had pierced his heart; he had turned to that King, and found at once favour and acceptance. In the type, Joseph presents foolishly his petition to the butler; in the antitype, the robber recognizes the King, though without any of the adjuncts of royalty, and notwithstanding, too, the terrible accompaniments of His actual position. And he avails himself of that King's having reached so low a place as where He then was, as to grasp the opportunity by putting in his humble plea for mercy. And who can tell how much this cry at such a time, when His spirit was overwhelmed with sorrow, may have contributed to His refreshing?

Then from the cross of Jesus there issues forth an effulgence supreme of light divine, which makes it patent to all His saints what is God's judgment of the world. It tells, indeed, of grace, and mercy, and peace in abundance for any and for all *out of* the world that believe in His name, and come forth unto Him, bearing His reproach. But since the world has cast Him out, and stands to its rejection of Him, therefore the blessing

of the world as such is suspended. He alone could turn its water into wine, and Him they have slain. Now He has no home here, save in the hearts of His little flock. He rests as yet on the throne of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His footstool. In Joseph's case, the years of plenty preceded the years of famine. Then it was mercy first, and judgment on the world afterwards. So likewise now, in yonder glory He is giving wine and milk, yea, heaven's richest blessings to all who come unto Him, without money and without price. Peace and joy, yea, and the Holy Ghost Himself, the Earnest of the inheritance are the present portion of those who believe in Him, whilst all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies are treasured up in Him for them. Such is the portion of any and of all who out of the world receive Him and cling to Him now. The world itself, indeed, and Israel as a nation likewise, shall also be blessed eventually; but as these as yet persist in their rejection of Him, such blessing can only be theirs, when the judgments of the Seals and of the Trumpets and of the Vials have first run their course. Amos, in his sixth chapter, alluding to the forgetfulness by the chief butler of Joseph and his wrongs, speaks of the world's luxury and pleasure-loving ease, whilst caring not at all for Him who has been cast out and slain. It is "not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." It puts "far away the evil day." May we have grace to discern the time, and be preserved from its spirit and its ways altogether! May we, looking down from our place in heaven, where in spirit we already are, and surveying the scene on earth below, from which we have been separated, rejoice that our name as known down there is Gershom, which, being interpreted, is "a stranger"—not here, but "THERE."

The Lord's Way with Joseph, the Typical Ruler.

Section IV.

The appointment of the ruler.

Genesis xli. 37—57.

CHAPTER XLI. 37—57. "The king sent and loosed him, even the ruler of the people, and let him go free. He made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his possessions; to bind his princes at his pleasure, and teach his senators wisdom" (Ps. cv. 20—22). But "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord; as the rivers of water, He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov. xxi.) And what a reversal of Potiphar's ignorant unrighteous sentence did Pharaoh accord to Joseph! From a prison to a throne, and at a bound; from being the victim of the wife of Potiphar's malignity, lifted at once to be Potiphar's lord. Yea, lord too he is constituted in Pharaoh's own house, and over all the land of Egypt, at that period the granary and the metropolis of the world. He is arrayed in royal vestures, and by the oath of Pharaoh everything is subjected to his will. After his incarceration of three years, his resurrection name is pronounced as Zaphnath Paaneah, which may be translated, "revealer of secrets," but much better, "saviour of the world."* And finally, to crown all, the grateful

* See note in Bagster's Bible, *in loco.*

monarch bestows on Joseph a wife suitable for him in his newly-acquired dignities, being one taken from the highest caste in the land, to wit, the priestly; Asenath, daughter of Potipherah, priest of On.

As for the abundance throughout all Egypt, which at once ensues after the appointment of Joseph, the inspired writer seems to labour to describe it. Two children are born to him, the one Manasseh, or "forgetfulness," by which name is implied his acquiescence during God's pleasure in the loss of his natural kindred; the other Ephraim, or "fruitfulness," signifying his compensatory joy at others, nearer still than those he had lost, being given unto him. And then at length, when the famine commences, and the people cry to Pharaoh, his ready answer is, "Go unto Joseph."

The beautiful type in all this it is easy for any believer to trace out. I would only offer therefore a few helping thoughts in this direction. I omit, of course, all reference to the doctrines and fundamental truths connected with Christ's resurrection. For to touch on them would lead us far away from what is designed in these "Typical Foreshadowings."

The world—aye, and the religious world too—condemned the Son of God as unfit to live. It consigned Him to a cross and to a tomb. It did all that was in its power to keep Him there, even as in its heart still, it believes Him dead and done with. Its real creed about Him, if it dared to utter it, would still find expression in the words of Festus, in Acts xxv. 19. But God has, as faith knows, reversed the world's verdict. Him whom it placed in a tomb, He has placed on His own throne. He is declared by His resurrection out of dead ones to be the Son of God in power. The Son as in

lowly guise, and in shame, and suffering, and death, He is no longer. As Isaac dies when Joseph is exalted, so now to Him all power in heaven and in earth is given. True, He still suffers in us His unworthy members. But for all that He has sanctified Himself, taking the place of exaltation in order that He may lift us up too to where He is. Now, inasmuch as He is the uncreated Son of God, He fills, as He alone is competent to fill, many offices in a divine manner towards God His Father, and towards His people, and to the world. Yet even now, such is the perfection of His obedience, He assumes no function, and fills no office, except those to which He is formally appointed by God. Is He a Saviour? Learn Who it was that appointed Him, from Ps. xl. 7, as quoted in Heb. x., 1 Cor. i. 30. Is He our great High Priest? To be this He has been duly called by Him that said to Him, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee." And God said this to Him, at the time of His resurrection (Acts xiii. 33). In this character He has been "publicly greeted" by God (Heb. v. 10, Greek). A wife has been found for Him, because it was not good that the man should be alone. To get her "He gave Himself." And now because He has said plainly—as plainly as ever He could say—that He loved His Master, His wife and children, therefore His ear has been bored, and since in resurrection He is a man still, therefore He is God's servant for ever (Exod. xxi.) And over all in God's house, which is the Church, and in the heavens, and in the earth, He is appointed Lord (Acts x. 36, Phil. ii.) And presently He will receive His investiture as King of the earth, and King of kings, at the hands of God (Rev. v.) Even "the things under the earth" and hell shall own His power. Only God proceeds in all this in an orderly way quite

His own. At present, Christ's power* is being exercised chiefly to bring unto heaven and unto God those chosen in Him before the foundation of the world. Then He will take up earth's matters, and lastly those of hell. Ultimately all things shall be subjected to His sway. And then, when this has fully come to pass, He will hand up the kingdom to God even the Father, that GOD may be all in all. But here I am somewhat anticipating.

Of course there is nothing in the history of Joseph to parallel with Christ's *ascension*. Because for *the kingdom* that ascension is not necessary. He might, had it so pleased God, have assumed the reins of government over the world immediately on His resurrection, and poured discomfiture on all His foes. But then where had His Church been which was to be lifted up to heaven, and to be united to Himself, and so its members all to be united to each other? Wherefore, for this grand purpose, the Holy Ghost must come down, by whom we are baptized into one body. But if the Spirit was to descend, it was "expedient" that He Himself should depart (John xvi. 7). Hence, if there is nothing in the narrative corresponding with Christ's ascension, it is, nevertheless, assumed as a fact. For here the Church corporately is represented by Asenath, and individually by Ephraim and Manasseh. So, too, in Leviticus, albeit, strictly speaking, there is no word about the Church; still in Aaron's sons, as in Lev. xvi., may be seen a shadow of the same truth. For we all are the children whom God hath given Him (Heb. ii.). Corporately we are the Bride, the Lamb's wife.

* In the epistle to the Hebrews over and over again we are reminded of Christ's ability, and how it is being exercised in our behalf.

Finally, if any are unsaved, and would be blessed in Him, God's word to such is, "Come unto Him." Whilst, as for us who have come to Him, let the injunction ring in our ears, "What He saith to you, do." "This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased, hear Him."

The Lord's Way with Joseph, the Typical Ruler.

Section V.

Joseph the ruler's behaviour towards his brethren.

Genesis xlii.—xlv. 12.

CHAPTERS XLII. to XLV. 12. The chief feature in all this section here to bear in mind is, that ere aught is done by Joseph for his brethren, *he is married.* And when his brethren come and bow down to him, they find one nearer and dearer to him than themselves. And, speaking after the manner of men, this bride he had never obtained had they not sold him to strangers. In chap. xlv. 4—9, four times over, Joseph assures his brethren that it was God, whose purpose was achieved even through their sin. It is not denied that they had much to do with his sorrows; but he means emphatically to say that whilst they had one object in view, God had another. Precisely so was it the case with the Lord. Men killed Him in their hate; yet they only did what God in His counsel had "determined before to be done" (Acts ii.) And of all His counsels in Christ, we know who and what were the objects of His earliest ones, and who will be seen nearest to Him in His glory, seated with Him on His throne. We know well in kindness to whom it is God will show out through Christ Jesus the exceeding riches of His grace in the ages which are

coming on (Eph. ii. 7). We know, too, that all this will only be according to the eternal purpose, "which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," and that even "now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies," it is by the Church that He is making known His "manifold wisdom" (Eph. iii. 10, 11).

But bearing this fact clearly in mind, we then can look well upon another. If His Church He takes to Himself, and makes her for beauty quite like Himself, ere He takes up again the cause of Israel and of Judah as a people, His kindred after the flesh, still that Church may be regarded, and is so looked at in Scripture, not only as a whole, but as to its members individually. These in the type we have seen represented by Joseph's children, Ephraim and Manasseh. As Israel, and especially the Jews, are His brethren according to the flesh, except only that He came "in the *likeness* of sinful flesh," so are we who now believe not only His Church in the aggregate, but we are His brethren in resurrection. With the single exception specified, He was to the Jews bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh. But this oft-repeated phrase in the Old Testament must be inverted when our relationship to Him as the sons of God is considered. For we are declared to be "members of *His* body; out of His flesh, and out of His bones." There was consanguinity of the Lord with Israel and with Judah; there is oneness of spirit between the Lord and ourselves (1 Cor. vi. 17). I mean that it is in resurrection whereby we become associated with Him (John xvii. 19 and Heb. ii. 11). He allied Himself with Israel, and with "the children" by becoming a "partaker of flesh and blood." He unites us in spirit to Himself as the risen Corn of Wheat. And when the period for earth's blessing has arrived, rank among the

nations of the earth will obtain, according to relative nearness to Israel's King; not again as to flesh and blood, but yet as to flesh and bones. For in His resurrection body there is no blood (Luke xxiv. 39, with chap. xxii. 20, Greek). But who cannot see the vastly higher dignity, the infinitely more wonderful nearness accorded by Him to the Church of God, when first even now we are all "made to drink into one spirit"—one spirit with the Lord; and when further, as will be seen in that day, our very bodies shall have been fashioned like unto the body of His glory (Phil. iii.)

Wherefore we may scripturally affirm that two different circles or classes of brethren He will then own as His, the one in the heavenlies, and the other in the earthlies. In these two varying senses is the same word, "brethren," used by Himself in resurrection in John xx. 17, as contradistinguished from Matt. xxviii. 10.* (See also Matt. xxv. 40.) So conversely we may say in view of the type of Jacob, and of his two wives, that the brides will be two likewise (Rev. xix., with Ps. xlv.); even as the Jerusalems are also two, the one termed the "Jerusalem above," and "the heavenly Jerusalem;" and the other the Jerusalem of Old Testament prophecy, as in the closing chapters of Isaiah (see lxv. 18), and of Ezekiel (see xlviii. 15), and Zech. xiv. Moreover, the heavenly one of these will be, during the Millennium, located in the air, immediately over the earthly one

* That the word "brethren" is used in a different sense in the two passages in Matt. xxviii. and John xx. is confirmed by the fact of the women being allowed to hold Him by the feet in Matthew, as Israel will do on earth in that day; whilst in John, Mary Magdalene hears Him say, "Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended," thus evidently pointing er mind to another and a far higher truth.

(Heb. xii.; Isa. iv. 5), the Son of Man being the one divine-human Centre of each sphere (John i. 51).

In this view of things it will be profitable to jot down a few particulars which are indicated in this section of Joseph's life. May they thrill our hearts with joy as we confess that "a greater than Joseph is here!" As, for instance, (1) Joseph has a brother's heart. Not even love for his bride so engrosses his attention as to hinder his concern for his brethren, and his showing kindness unto them. Everyone must admit that the people of God in these last days have been so taken up with the greatness of their own blessings as unfolded in the Word, as almost at times to ignore the fact that there are many promises which belong specially to Israel. We may very properly, I think, feel that such promises in a higher sense contain words of comfort to ourselves, inasmuch as all the promises are yea and amen in Christ. Still, these cannot be literally fulfilled, according as their language constantly implies must be the case, until Israel as a nation is restored and blessed.

Besides which, there is profit for us in another aspect of these two classes of brethren. For surely as Christ loves the Church corporately, so does He love each member thereof individually. For instance, that grand passage in Eph. v. 25—32, treating of His grace towards the Church, Paul teaches us individually to appropriate in Gal. ii. 20. For there the first two of the seven things specified in the former passage he unreservedly applies to himself. But if he, one member of His Church, thus sets us this example, undoubtedly we may do the like. We each may say, "The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me." Now if we may in this hearty manner appropriate the first two of those seven clauses to ourselves, there can be no hesitation in like-

wise appropriating each of the others. Wherefore we may say, "Christ loved *me;* He gave Himself for *me;* He sanctifies *me;* He cleanses *me;* He nourishes *me* He cherishes *me;* He will present *me* to Himself." For if the Lord can think of Israel, and of His brethren after the flesh, as well as of the Church of God, how much more than of His Jewish brethren can He love and care for the individual members of the Church? Hence, whilst Eph. iii. treats of the Church's corporate blessing, Eph. i. treats of the individual's blessing. In grace the individual is put first, and the least before the greatest.

2. When these brethren of his first came to seek his help in their need, whilst they knew not the thoughts of his heart, little did they seek from him. Bread for their households, and temporal salvation for themselves and their families, was the utmost desire which they had. Is there not something similar in our own case when we first come to the Lord Jesus? To be saved from hell, or at most to be saved from sin, is all that we expect. As that wretched perversion of Phil. iv. 19 is often heard put, we ask to be blessed "according to our need," instead of our God supplying our need, indeed, but according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. That is, His blessing of us is to be proportioned to the extent of His riches, and not of our poverty. He will continue deepening our need, and the sense thereof, in order that He may pour in of His riches all the more. And yet ofttimes it is difficult to bring Christians to see that God never can content Himself in telling out His own infinite fulness, and the exceeding preciousness of His Son, by meeting only our comparatively little need? When He saved us, did we *need* to be made the sons of God? Did we need to be made heirs of God and joint-

heirs with Christ? Most certainly not. Such things had never entered our hearts to conceive. Yet it is in this way that He has blessed us. He delights to surprise us giving us at once far more than we expect. We implore forgiveness of sins; and lo! at the same time that He gives us this He also gives us everlasting life, and never one without the other; as if the other were too little a thing for Him to give by itself. And yet that forgiveness cost the Son of God His life. But constantly in Scripture it is represented that the gift of God is eternal life. The forgiveness of sins removes the hindrance on our part to the inflow of His gift of life. Nor does He stop there. Then He gives the Holy Ghost to dwell in us, and to lead us into all the truth, and to show us the glory of the Lord and the things to come, in order that He may create and fan in our hearts the hope of our Lord's return. Thus does He continue to give us richer and richer discoveries of His grace and love, ever keeping the best until the last. And who can tell how He will proceed in glory when at last, according to the long pent up desire of His heart, He has us with Himself where He is (John xvii. 24).

3. The object that Joseph had in view in his singular dealings with his brethren was evidently to bring them to a sense of their unrighteous hate of himself, and to repent thereof accordingly. His measures soon began to take effect. Thus look at Reuben's appeal to his brethren in chap. xlii. 22. And especially look at that most noble and magnanimous offer of Judah to be a bond-slave, instead of Joseph's own brother Benjamin. And I think that whilst that artless and telling story was told to Joseph, ending with the offer itself to be bound in Benjamin's stead, the silence of the others implied that what Judah had offered they assented to

in that degree, that any or all of them were willing as well as Judah to be the substitutes for the supposed incriminated one. Verily they must have been much changed in regard to the offspring of Rachel, ere they could thus all speak through Judah their mouthpiece. In like manner, after Christ's resurrection, the inspired word of Peter to the Jews' anxious inquiry, "What must we do?" His reply was brief: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ." He had pressed home their guilt, and many were pricked in their hearts at his words. Truly, then, the nation did not repent. They stood to their sin, as was seen in their murder of Stephen. But the time comes when yet Israel shall be bowed down, and when the Jews shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn (Zech. xii. 10). "In that day there shall be a great mourning in Jerusalem." "Every eye shall see Him, and they also that pierced Him; and all the tribes of the land shall wail because of Him" (Rev. i. 7). These tears are penitential ones, as is the mourning in Matt. xxiv. 30. I refrain now from entering upon the prophetic questions as to the mode of the Jews' restoration, and deliverance from their oppressors, at the appearing of their great Messiah. All such matters I have sought to bring out the full teaching of Scripture on, in my Lectures on the Revelation, to which I must refer you. Rom. xi., Dan. xii., and the last chapters of Zechariah, are full of divine teaching on these points.

But then, again, to us, His brethren in a higher sense, when we have believed in Him, He does not invariably cause soul-anguish in order that we may be cast on Him. Some very quickly find peace and joy in believing. It is not essential that any preliminary work should take place with souls ere they accept Christ

and His finished work. All is done, and His first word to us is, "Come unto Me; believe in Me." But inasmuch as many are not disposed at once to drink wine and milk without money and without price, therefore they often go through a time of sorrow and of distress of heart, through occupation with self and with their own unworthiness. Hence He says, "Come unto Me, all ye that are weary and heavy-laden." The jailer at Philippi is an instance of God's way in giving salvation at once to faith. The case of Cornelius is a specimen of the latter: of one being led on step by step until the word of salvation is embraced. When the Gospel is preached Sunday after Sunday, and heard by the same people, the effect usually produced is, I think, according to the latter mode. I mean that gradually and noiselessly the word falls like dew upon the grass. But when souls hear the word who never heard it before, and when the Gospel is carried into regions where it had not previously penetrated, then I think souls are often brought to the Lord at once on a single hearing of it. But in all cases the delay in not grasping the peace of the Gospel is not caused by the Lord, is not according to His will; the hindrance is in men's own unbelief. Salvation is to hand on faith's acceptance.

4. These brethren were for paying for all which they obtained from Joseph. They brought money with them; and when it was returned, and placed in their sacks' mouth, then the second time they brought double money. They attributed the return of their first money to oversight, and deprecated Joseph's displeasure by speaking to his steward about their departure from Egypt without having paid their money. Thus, we see, one mistake—or, rather, misapprehension—led on to another. Not knowing who he was, and his kindly dis-

position, led them to imagine that he would haggle with them about payment (chap. xlii. 35, xliii. 12, 22). Alas! alas! legality is natural to all our hearts. How slow we are to apprehend that all is of grace; that God's glory is in giving and man's blessing is in receiving what God gives. How difficult to submit to His way of getting all for nothing, until we are saved, when first He will accept our praise and worship, and when first He makes us to know what rivers of living water He can cause to flow out from us in doing good to others. That word in Isaiah lv. 1, though full of consolation, surely contains indirect reproof. It assumes that we think we must pay with our money and our price for His wine and milk. But yet this is only one side of the truth. God could not bless sinners and give them salvation, except in a righteous way; whatever God gave to sinners before Christ died, was on credit. Thus the sins of Old Testament saints, He is said rather to have "passed over," than to have forgiven, in Rom. iii. 25, Greek. But now, everything we get, is freely given through the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. This very earth is His. Those who refuse His grace, but accept His earthly gifts, would otherwise be almost like trespassers upon it. He is the Saviour of all men, inasmuch as all receive daily mercies from Him (1 Tim. iv. 10). He prefers to begin, by giving salvation and all things therewith. But many refuse the former; though they covet the latter and as much of His earthly gifts as they can obtain. He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Still, the point I press is this:—however little all and everything of His costs us, it cost the Lord much. Salvation is free, is given to us for nothing, but it cost the Lord all He had. Peradventure, the truth that salvation is given so heartily and so readily by God,

is more apprehended by us than the counter truth that all is done in righteousness.

5. Another singular feature in Joseph's behaviour, we must not omit to notice. As we might term Jeremiah the weeping prophet, so might we speak of Joseph as the weeping ruler. (1) He wept in chap. xlii. 24, when he heard them say, "We are verily guilty," a beautiful picture of the state of the soul of the remnant in the last days. (2) He wept when he beheld Benjamin, representing the ten absent tribes (xliii. 30). (3) He wept when he had ascertained that there was no reserve in their repentance, as certainly as there was no reserve of love on his part, in chap. xlv. 1. (4) He wept again in xlv. 14, when all together they were before him; his perfect love casting out fear. (5) He wept over his father Jacob, on his beholding him before him in the land of Egypt. For then those who had been as good as dead to each other, embraced again each other as if in resurrection (chap. xlvi. 29). (6) He wept with natural sorrow, on the death of his father Jacob (chap. l. 1). And lastly, he wept in chap. l. 15, when his love was, after forgiveness and restoration, doubted.

Of the Lord when on earth we need scarcely, I trust, to be reminded that He was a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And twice particularly we are told of *His* tears. He wept some* tears at the grave of Lazarus: not for Lazarus' sake alone, for He knew He was about to raise him. But there rose up before His mind's eye *all* the sorrows, and specially all such sorrows, of all His people, evidencing that in all their affliction He is afflicted. But He burst into a flood of tears * as He gazed upon Jerusalem, in its hardness and

* In John xi. 35 the Greek word is δακρυω, to shed a tear or two; but in Luke xix. 41 the word is κλαιω, to weep with a flood of tears.

ignorance of its day of visitation; for He knew what woes would shortly descend upon it. And forasmuch as the time of that abundant weeping of His was almost the same as when He pronounced those eight woes Himself in Matt. xxiii., we learn, by placing the two accounts in Luke and in Matthew side by side, in what sort of spirit He uttered His denunciations. He spoke as if with a broken heart. Their sins He spared not, but yet He spoke in overwhelming sorrow. Am I asked why He should weep more at the unbelief of the wicked than at the many sorrows of His own people which came up before Him as He stood at the grave of Lazarus? The answer is at hand. For, apart from the wrong done to God and to Himself by man's unbelief and rejection of Him, oh! think of the inconceivable and eternal anguish which must be the lot of those who die in their sins. Already ere this we have seen that the sins of the antediluvians so affected God, that He was grieved at heart. Do not let us attempt to tone down aught of this sorrow of our God and of His Christ; but let us imitate Him. And when we preach the Gospel to the unsaved, and warn the unrepentant of the wrath to come, let us do this as Paul did, with "sorrow of heart;" yea, and more, let it be evident that our sorrow is great and unfeigned (Rom. ix. 2; Phil. iii. 18). And, finally, let us be assured that when the wicked are placed before the great white throne, and judged according to the things written in the books, though He will laugh at their calamities (Prov. i.), still, this will not be owing to any present unreadiness, to any want of will to save anyone now, but the cause, is "I would," but "ye would not" (Matt. xxiii. 37). Never will He relent, never can He, though unmitigated and endless woe He will have to pronounce. Nay, more,

His very breath will be the agency whereby all this shall be inflicted (Isa. xxx. 33; Rev. xix. 15). But all these tears and His precious blood remain witnesses for ever unto Him, that if the salvation of the righteous is of the Lord, the damnation of the wicked is only their own fault.

6. Joseph tested his brethren well and perfectly ere he revealed himself unto them. And between our first coming to Him for salvation, and His unveiling Himself to us up there, a space of time, and often a long time, intervenes. He tests us, whether we love Him and do cling to Him. He furnishes us with opportunities of showing forth our love to Him. And by the trials which He Himself doth send unto us, He teaches us to cling to Him, to care for His smile, to esteem Him our all. Then when we have learned our lesson, and our work in suffering is past, "our ever-loving Father will welcome every one," and we shall see our Lord as He is. Joseph said, "I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt." But He does not want to upbraid us. In many passages of the Word He instructs us carefully how so to abide and walk in Him, how so to please Him, that when He comes, we may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless (Luke xii. 32, 40). And this we know for our comfort, that "He is able to keep us from tripping, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy," on His part, and with much even on our part. (Jude 24). When He brings the sheep home, mark His joy in Luke xv. 6. "He will joy over us with singing" (Zeph. iii. 19). The story of the prodigal son's welcome back is scarcely finished: perhaps because it never could be. The last words are, "And they *began* to be merry." And so the curtain falls, as if the joy were, as it is, unending.

The Jewish remnant, too, by means of the sorrows of

the great tribulation through which they must pass, because of their rejection of Messiah, shall yet be brought to hope for His return. Ps. xliv., Isa. lxiii. 15, "Look down from heaven;" Isa. lxiv. 1, "Come down." See also Rev. vii., xiii., xiv.

7. Meanwhile, He lives. We may not see Him, yet He lives. Joseph was hidden for a while from his brethren. They had one more that loved them, and whose heart yearned over them, than they were aware of. Let us, His brethren, never forget this. On the mountain-brow He sees the ship tossed with the billows, and the winds contrary, and ourselves toiling in rowing; but we are "not far from land." He is coming, and we shall rise to meet Him; and so shall we be for ever with the Lord, in His house eternally shut in.

Chapters XLV. 13 to XLVII. 12. Joseph's work for his brethren is not yet completed; his love is yet unsatisfied. Every one of them, as well as their wives and their children, as also Jacob, he desires, and must have them all at home with himself. In Goshen, the choicest part of the land of Egypt, he will cause them to dwell. Then he will take care of them all, and nourish them. Accordingly, preparations are made for the journey in comfort of them all, and specially of Jacob. He, when the news is first brought to him that Joseph his son lives, and is governor over all the land of Egypt, is amazed and incredulous. At length, convinced, he prepares, as it would appear somewhat hastily, to set out, and soon reaches the confines of the promised land at Beersheba. But there a thought, which causes him a thrill of anguish, occurs to him. Is he doing right in leaving Palestine, and journeying into Egypt? Both Abraham and Isaac had erred: Abraham in going down to Egypt, and Isaac in settling at Gerar.

He pauses. On the one hand, he is inclined to proceed, in the hope of again beholding his son Joseph; but, on the other, is he on the path to commit sin, as his fathers had done? Then he offers sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac. Here we have a beautiful instance of fear of committing sin, not of some sin of which the world could take cognizance, but yet a step which he knew might not be pleasing to God. Those who are God's saints are perfectly aware that there is much which the world would see no harm in, but which one in God's light, or swayed by His fear, would know was disobedient, or wilful, or unconfiding towards Him. Their standard of purity is far higher than the world's; it is what is acceptable in the eyes of a holy God. And to think that it was Jacob, the once froward, and who had so signally, and over and over again, failed in the second part of his service, that part of returning homewards, wherein he more resembles us, the sons of God, that it was he who was thus at length so broken in and subdued: all this is most encouraging. The servant may fail, but the erring child is restored.

We have another instance of this same holy fear and jealous watch over his own proclivities in chap. xlviii. 14, where, though Joseph sought to induce him to act otherwise, he would not repeat his father's blunder in attempting, contrary to the divine will, to give the larger blessing to the elder born. So here, too, if through his desire to gladden his eyes with a sight of his beloved child Joseph, he had set out hastily, yet he stops himself just in time. Far better, if we have begun aught in a hurry, to pause awhile, unless we are quite sure we are in the path of duty, and can go on in communion with God. For "whatsoever is not of faith is sin." Hence, he refuses to act, until he is clear as to the way in

which he should go. He who is ever uncertain as to which of two paths he should take to please God, should take neither, should refuse to move at all, until the faithful God has removed the perplexity. He may not, He will not show us all the way at once unto the end of our course, but He will guide us by one step at a time. And our part is ever persistently to wait until He has signified clearly to our souls what the next step should be.

Then God speaks to Jacob in the visions of the night, calling him by his name, and so recognizing him as His own, encourages him to go down to Egypt, and promises to go down with him into Egypt, and to bring him up again. Now this God who appeared to His servant, and directed him in his course, is our own God; yea, and our most loving Father, a name that Jacob knew nothing of as belonging to God. Nay more, even the word Jehovah, which signifies His relationship with Israel, is not found once throughout the history of Joseph in Egypt until we come to chap. xlix. 18, wherein, of course, the glance is at the future in regard to what, as Jehovah, he was pledged to do, to deliver Israel from Egypt. But yet in the wise counsels of God it was proper that the nation of Israel, then in its infancy, should go down to Egypt, and should even suffer greatly there. Because it was necessary that the nation should be preserved utterly distinct and separate from all the tribes around. But as we have seen in chap. xxxviii., there was danger, had the nation continued in Palestine, of their intermarrying with the people there, and who were doomed to destruction when their iniquity was full.

2. We have in the next place to observe the tender care by God of His people when they are away from home, and when He leads them into times of trial and

of danger. So here we see that He counts them one by one, and records also their names.* See Isa. xliii. 1, 2, which is a striking commentary on, and explanation of, the purport of this passage (chap. xlvi. 8—27). It is important for us to let this blessed truth sink into our hearts, for as long as our Lord tarries, trouble is our lot. It may even be that some sore persecution may yet await us for aught we can tell. For His sake we are killed all the day long, and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. So He fared when He was here; who of us would desire to fare otherwise, or to be caressed by a world that cast Him out? Still who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? "Nay, IN all these things" —not in the avoidance of them—"in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Rom. viii. 35—37). And something else we may remember to encourage us. When Israel waxed a greater people, they are always represented as counted in their thousands, as Micah v.; but as for the Church of God, every one member is spoken of as known by the Good Shepherd (Luke xv.; John x. 3). The reader will have remarked how much is made of individual ones in the Gospel by John, as in chaps. iii., iv., v., viii., ix., x. Even the invitation in John differs in

* In Gen. xlvi. 27, the number that came into Egypt is stated to be seventy. But Stephen speaks of seventy-five in Acts vii. 14. Yet there is no discrepancy. For if we look at Gen. xlvi. 26, we find the number mentioned as sixty-six. To which if we add Jacob, Joseph, and his two sons Ephraim and Manasseh, we get seventy. On the other hand, if to this sixty-six we add the nine wives of Jacob's sons, we get seventy-five. For Judah and Simeon had lost their wives (chap. xxxviii. 12, with xlvi. 10).

this particular from that in Matthew. For whereas in Matthew it is worded, "Come unto Me, all ye," etc.; in John it is expressed in the singular number, "Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out." Yea, Christ "tasted death for every one" of these (Heb. ii.) And "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." For whilst Israel is to be saved nationally, and Gentiles likewise for the millennial earth are to be a "multitude that no man can number"; the Church is a little flock, or rather, as it should have been rendered, "a little, little flock."

But if the Church is passing through sorrow and persecution throughout the entire period that it pleases God to continue her down here, which is until the Lord Jesus descends from heaven; still it is a distinct promise to her that from "the tribulation, the great one" which is now looming in the distance, she shall be "kept." For, ere it commences, the Church is to be removed to her heavenly home (Rev. iii. 10). But that period is affirmed by the prophet to be "the time of Jacob's trouble" (Jer. xxx. 7). And this important distinction sheds most valuable light on Luke xxi. 36, where the Lord warns His disciples to see that they "escape all the things which are to come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man." But this word *escape* imports a salvation only obtained by being preserved in passing quite through the trial (1 Cor. x. 13). Hence this warning was addressed to Jewish disciples as such. For, indeed, the Church's prospect is not finally to "stand before the Son of Man." We are to be "presented" indeed—to be "manifested" at the tribunal of Christ (Rom. xiv. 10; 2 Cor. v. 10). But this moment of the judgment of our works is subsequent to our being received unto Himself. Our place in glory is to sit

down with Christ upon His throne. But the Jews have rejected Him their Messiah, and the mass of them will receive the antichrist (John v. 43; Matt. xii. 45). For this rejection of Him they must experience a taste of the sort of ruler and of his sway which they have preferred to His own. And whilst the two tribes are suffering in the land under the antichrist, God will begin to conduct the ten* tribes back thitherwards, and will plead with them in the wilderness, as He did of old with their fathers, and purge out the rebels from among them (see Ezek. xx. 33—40). And thus there will be a remnant saved in each case: of the ten tribes as we read here, and also of the two tribes tested by the great tribulation (Zech. xiii. 8; Dan. xii. 1). Then after the sifting of the ten tribes, and the regeneration of the remnant of these, and when Christ has appeared for the deliverance of the Jews, God will bring these ten tribes also unto the land of Palestine (Ezek. xxxvi. 24—37). The manner of their arrival there is most touchingly depicted (Jer. xxxi. 7—11, and in Isa. xlix. 20—23). And whilst the mass of the old nation perishes, these two remnants will be united into the one new nation of Israel (Ezek. xxxvii. 16; Matt. xxi. 43). "It shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation; and one King and one Lord shall be over all" (Zech. xiv.). Yes, the crucified One is King of the Jews.

At length, Jacob, his children, and their families, arrive all of them in Goshen. Jacob and Joseph, after so

* Where the ten tribes are at present, no one can tell. That the English are the lost ten tribes, is one of the devil's lies, equally with another, that London is Babylon. Satan's object in misleading men in these ways, is to attempt to blunt the force of Scripture. There is a pamphlet of Wilkinson's, published by Haughton, 10, Paternoster Row, and entitled "Englishmen not Israelites," which the writer recommends.

many years of separation, behold once again each other's face. And thus God, showed Himself better not only than their fears, but better, too, than all their hopes. Jacob exclaims in his joy, "Now let me die, since I have seen Thy face, because Thou art yet alive" (chap. xlvi. 30). But a little before he had plaintively uttered, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me" (chap. xlii. 36). The aged patriarch seems to have been intensely attached to each of his children. And we see evidence here that whilst he was giving vent to his unbelieving sorrow, God was working all things together for good unto them. And this picture might serve as a lesson for us, who have lost friends in Christ of whom we were fond. And we have seen them waste away as to their flesh before our eyes, and though we have cried unto the Lord to spare them to us, they have departed from us. But not for ever have we lost them. Another who loves them far more than we, has them with Himself, who will soon gather us all around Himself, and then shall our eyes again behold those in Christ whom we loved on earth. Nor shall we behold them again as before in their weakness and in their pains, but with their brows irradiated with glory, and themselves and us all with the Lord, and for ever.

3. All the family of Jacob were sent for into Egypt. Provision was expressly made for the conveyance of such as were weak and of tender years. How expressive in the type is all this! All, all that are God's saints must presently be gathered home into the presence of that Brother born for adversity, and Who sticks closer than any brother ever did before, Who, though separated from us for a while, has still a heart to love us, to sympathize with us, and to desire that we should be where He is. Nor do I now allude only to the

Church of God; the Old Testament saints, though not so one with Christ as we are, were yet called with a heavenly calling (Heb. xi. 10, 16). Therefore all these, too, must be there in that coming day of jubilee, and of happy reunion. There ought not to be any question that these Old Testament saints will be raised simultaneously with us in view of such Scriptures as Heb. xi. 40, 2 Thess. i. 10, Matt. viii. 11. For that resurrection morn is the moment of the resurrection of all "the just" (Luke xiv. 14).

4. Finally, Joseph presents, first, five of his brethren, and afterwards his father* Jacob, to Pharaoh, as the supreme potentate. By his will their place is assigned them in the land of Goshen, the best part of the land of Egypt. And Christ will receive us unto Himself; and not only so, but will reveal to us God in Him. Yes, we "shall see God;" our eyes shall behold the King in His beauty (1 John iii.). And whilst the Church, as the eternal Bride of the Lamb, is caused to sit down with Him upon His throne, the saints of the Old Testament will have their own proper and exalted sphere likewise (Heb. xii. 23). On earth Israel first, and then the numbers numberless of the nations, are ranged before His throne, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands (Rev. vii., xiv.) And the two nations which of old gave Israel so much trouble shall have their animosity changed into intimate friendship, upon a true, because a holy basis (Isa. xix. 24).

* In Jacob's blessing of Pharaoh, besides the obvious lesson taught us, as in Paul's wish that all his noble auditors were like himself, there probably is the sentiment of gratitude. For Pharaoh had been far kinder to his son Joseph than his own brethren had been. It is ofttimes, alas! the same thing still. Worldly men behave more honourably, more kindly towards us than those whom we trusted as brethren.

The Lord's Way with Joseph, the Typical Ruler.

Section VI.

Joseph the ruler's service to Pharaoh, in the full subjugation of all to his authority, and in blessing to the whole land.

Genesis xlvii. 13—26.

CHAPTER XLVII. 13—26. Already, in speaking of Israel's blessing under Messiah's sway, I have spoken of the saved Gentiles, and of the world's blessing, sufficiently to illustrate the picture which we have here, and which is nearly all that these "Typical Foreshadowings" allow of my now doing. I content myself, therefore, with calling attention to the type, when Joseph, we find, obtains the land of Egypt for Pharaoh, and disposes of the inhabitants in cities as he judges good. In the antitype "the field is the world," which has all been bought by the Man Christ Jesus (Matt. xiii. 44). And He will have "all the nations," or "all the Gentiles," gathered before Him, separating them as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, and assigning to each individual his irrevocable, his eternal condition (Matt. xxv. 31—46). Nothing is here said of the judgment of the dead; for the saints that had died had been raised ere this. And the wicked dead are raised at a later period, when the heavens and earth flee

away, and they stand before the great white throne (Rev. xx.) Here is the judgment of those living on the earth, when Christ has come down in behalf of Israel. The destiny of each severally is meted out by Him according to each individual's attitude towards His earthly brethren the Jews, during the great tribulation, out of which they had been rescued by His appearing in their behalf. Each one's demeanour towards these was constructively directed towards Himself. Then of the Lord's reign over the saved, many of the Psalms abound in glowing words (see also Zech. xiv.) Then the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the seas.

The Lord's Way with Joseph, the Typical Ruler.

Section VII.

The closing years of Jacob and of Joseph.

Genesis xlvii. 27 to the end.

CHAPTER XLVII. 27 to the end. The Lord Jesus, as Son of Man, will reign for a thousand years; yet of His kingdom there shall be no end. His kingdom as the Lord is for ever and ever. Likewise, again, His saints reign with Him throughout that thousand years (Rev. xx. 4); yet they, too, reign for ever and ever (Rev. xxii. 5; Dan. vii.) Their service in Rev. xxii. 3, under His eye according to verse 4, partakes of a regal character, according to verse 5. But how is this apparent contradiction as to the duration of that reign to be cleared up? Easily. The reign over evil, subduing it wholly, and over every foe, until each one has been dealt with and judged, is during the Millennium; but when at length there is no more any "evil occurrent," His throne will be finally established in righteousness. Then, before any evil can break out in the reconciled heavens and earth (see Col. i. 20), His throne must itself be overturned. Evil will then have had its day, have done its worst, its all; and it has been grappled with, overcome, and totally defeated. And

then it is shut up, and sinners too, whether angels or men, in hell for ever.* So when He hath at last put down all rule, and all authority and power, He will, as Son of Man, hand up the kingdom in its entirety to God, even the Father, that GOD may be all in all. Never before was there seen such a vast, such an universal sway. For realms and tracts of land, small potentates on earth had often striven. Yea, even in Satan's eyes the earthly part alone of this immense rule was a supreme attraction (Matt. iv. 8; Rev. xx. 8—10). But Christ, the divine and perfect Servant-king, hands up the whole unto God. To advert to the type here, the typical servant Jacob, and the typical ruler Joseph, pass from before our eyes. And whilst Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more, the time arrives for Him to surrender up this peculiar rule of His to God, and naught remains but for God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to dwell in righteousness over a universe purged and renewed, and over an earth reclaimed. What a perfect Servant to the end is He! And what a service, perfect in all its parts, He has rendered unto God! The children all brought home to God, the righteous rewarded, the wicked punished, and opposition, every breath of it, quelled for ever!

Now God can have His own way unhindered in blessing for ever. And so as well in Genesis as in Revelation, or as in 1 Cor. xv., the curtain falls with divine rule triumphant everywhere. What God will proceed to do, what He will begin and go on with, when this

* In the passage quoted (Col. i. 20), we read of Christ reconciling all things in TWO spheres; but in Phil. ii. 10 we hear of all things subjected to Him in THREE spheres—to wit, in heaven, and in earth, and under the earth. The exception of this third realm from the reconciliation of Col. i. 20 is suggestive.

preliminary dispensation which we call time is over, and passed by for ever, what He will ultimately unfold as "the ages which are coming on" run their course, is nearly all unrevealed. Enough for us to know at present that God wins the day, that they who trusted in Him, and who obeyed Him, are blessed, and that the wicked are accursed, and that of each class the lot is fixed once and for ever. Then, judgment over, He rests in His love. His "tabernacle," that is the Church of God,* "is with men." To settle everything in heaven and in earth, according to His mind, He had to come forth. But all this perfectly attained, He retires to His rest. Love divine, holy love; love in light, light in love, shines down on all His reconciled creation, in its many concentric circles, for ever.

With these few words I pass from the antitypical converging lines of truth foreshadowed by these closing chapters of Genesis. Those who may desire to study more of what *is* revealed of the near future, of the ways of God as displayed in Christ's reign during the millennium, and in that reign itself being followed by that which is more glorious still, and in the mode of closing that one period of glory, and in the mode of opening the remoter eternal scene, or in the allowed irruption in between these two glories, millennial and eternal, by Satan, who is to be let out of his prison after the thousand years have expired, and in the summary vengeance inflicted by the living God upon him, and upon all the remaining foes, and in the huge assembly before the great white throne, and then in the new heavens and new earth: such may find these matters enlarged upon

* Rev. xii. 6: "His tabernacle, those who dwell in heaven." For the word "and," in the authorized version, after the mention of His tabernacle, ought to be omitted.

in my Lectures on the Book of the Revelation. In conclusion, therefore, there needs only that we take a glance at the other inspired touches in the narrative itself. These may briefly be summed up thus:—

1. Jacob's choice of Ephraim to Manasseh, in chap. xlviii.

2. His blessing of the twelve tribes, and his death, in chap. xlix.

3. And lastly, Joseph's death, in chap. l.

Chapter XLVIII. When looking at Jacob's pausing at Beersheba, after he had set out to behold Joseph's face in Egypt, the scene here was surveyed along with that one there. The two were presented together in order to show that the furnace of affliction, through which Jacob had passed, had been of immense use to him, as seen in chap. xlvi., by his trembling refusal to move a foot forward until he was assured of the divine sanction of his step. And here, again, we have proof of wilfulness subdued, and of his attentive ear to hear what God shall say to him, and to do even as he is directed. For the account of his blessing of Joseph's younger son in preference to the elder, notwithstanding the objections of Joseph, is in beautiful contrast with the obstinacy of Isaac, his father, on a similar occasion, when he sought to act counter to the purpose of God, and to secure the blessing to the child of his own preference, the elder-born, Esau. Doubtless, Jacob had reflected much upon the evil consequences to himself, and to all the parties concerned, through Isaac's obstinacy, and on the impossibility of thwarting the will of the omnipotent God. But Jacob's own afflictions had been sanctified to him. His sun was setting, without clouds, after a stormy day!

Much more seems to be conveyed in verse 12 than at once strikes the eye. The two children are there, being so arranged by Joseph, that Jacob's right hand might the more readily be placed upon Manasseh's head; and his left, upon Ephraim's. But whilst Joseph is thus occupied, Jacob is listening intently for the divine direction, as to which of the two is to be the pre-eminent one. The signal from heaven he hears in his spirit, and he "bows himself," in acquiescence, "with his face to the earth." Therefore he, with prophetic knowledge, crosses his hands, so that his right hand may repose upon the head of Ephraim, who is placed upon his left. The whole of his action at this moment is done in faith. For so we read: "By faith, Jacob, when he was adying, blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff" * (Heb. ix. 21). And in this manner does he show his estimate of all Egypt's glory, when he, a dying man, blesses the sons of Egypt's viceroy.† But as for himself, his own glance is towards Bethlehem, where all his former hopes had been buried with Rachel, and whence they were, as if in resurrection, to emerge, when He "whose going forth had been from of old, from everlasting," should be born there (Micah v. 2).

Chapter XLIX. Here we perceive the aged patriarch still continuing to look at everything in the light that faith supplies, even as he had done in the preced-

* On this passage, see my Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews, p. 108.

† So, too, had Jacob, on a previous occasion, blessed Pharaoh himself. He, a poor pilgrim, had blessed the mightiest and wealthiest potentate on earth. For he was perfectly aware who of them was the beloved of God, and "the less is blessed of the better."

ing chapter. For here he distributes the possession of Canaan among his sons, as if he himself were there reigning in peace, and as if he and his family were not all of them strangers in a strange land, and as if the Amorite did not yet retain possession of the land which was Israel's own. But a great contrast is observable in the blessing of Moses, in Deut. xxxiii., and that of Jacob, as we find it recorded here. For there, no evil of theirs is noticed at all, unless it be in the lawgiver's silence as to Simeon, whose then recent sin with the Midianitish women had been so specially of a tribal character.* But, with this exception, all the tribes are as children. There all is of grace. Thus, of the firstborn, Moses says: "Let Reuben live and not die," (*i.e.*, for his sin). But here Jacob blesses his sons as heads of tribes, and in reviewing their conduct severally in the past, predicts their respective places when settled in their land.

Once more, the entire spiritual history of Israel in the past, and present, and future, may possibly be traced here in Jacob's blessing of these tribes, as thus:—

I. *Apostate Israel of Old.*

1. Reuben = Israel of old, God's "son and firstborn" (Exod. iv. 22). "Unstable." 2 and 3. Simeon and Levi = Israel, rebellious and murderous (Matt. xxiii. 29—36). This their way eventually filled up; first, in the murder of Christ, and next, of those whom He,

* On a comparison of the two numberings of Israel, the former one made on their entrance into the wilderness (Num. ii.), and the latter, when they were about to emerge from it (Num. xxvi.), we find that whilst in the interim all the other tribes had either somewhat increased, or, at most, slightly diminished, Simeon, which had been counted up to 59,000 on entering the wilderness, had decreased to 22,000 ere it left it.

when risen from the dead, sent unto them (Acts vii. 52 ; 1 Thess. ii. 15, 16). So, to be scattered and nationally rejected.

II. *Christ at His First Coming and Now.*

4. Judah, tribal character and sceptre to be retained, till the Lord came. Christ, the Lion and the Shiloh. Then would He have gathered Israel, but "He was despised and rejected of men." Therefore, Israel's time of mercy deferred. But verses 11 and 12 show what shall yet be the state of things in the land, under Christ's millennial sway.

III. *The Despised Nation Now.*

5. Zebulun = Israel, a merchant. 6. Issachar = Israel subject to Gentile rule.

IV. *The Nation under the Wilful King and Antichrist.*

7. Dan. See Lev. xxiv. 11 ; Judges xviii. Mark, too, the omission of the tribe of Dan in Revelation vii. Still, he shall finally have a portion, as in Ezek. xlviii. Here may be hinted the future apostasy, and the mass of the nation idolaters. See John v. 43 ; Matt. xii. 45. But still an election, a remnant to be saved. Hence,

V. *The Faithful Remnant saved, to be made into the New Nation* (Matt. xxi. 43).

8. Gad = Victory at the end. 9. Asher = "blessed." 10. Naphtali = freedom and worship.

VI. *Christ the Coming One.*

11. Joseph. Shot at by the archers, but His bow abode in strength. All blessings His that was separated from His brethren. Christ the Shepherd and Stone of Israel.

VII. *Christ the Reigning One.*

12. Benjamin. Son of the right hand. It is a coincidence, that when the Church has been removed to heaven, as in Rev. iv., the vision of the Being enthroned

is compared to the sight of a jasper, and of a sardine stone, the two stones which on the high priest's dress represented Benjamin and Reuben.

Chapter L. Jacob had been very solicitous to be buried in Canaan, and had caused Joseph his son to swear that he would attend to that heart's wish of his. Previously, when Jacob had stood before Pharaoh, he had not asked for anything; for in Egypt he was contented to *live* a stranger. The world, of which Egypt is the type, can only be a place of pilgrimage to a saint of God; and, accordingly, of the last seventeen years of his life which he spent there, little is recorded. But of his body being carried back to the land of his fathers, the story is told us here in full detail; for resurrection was his hope. As with his ancestors, so with himself; he died in faith, not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, was persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that he was a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth. Thus did he declare plainly that he sought a country, a better country, that is, a heavenly (Heb. xi. 13—16). He and the other patriarchs did not receive the promise, because God had provided some better thing still for us, and because it is His will that they and we should, being perfected together at the same time in resurrection, each get his own blessing (Heb. xi. 39, 40). And, hence, in Heb. xii. there is each party beheld in millennial glory: both the spirits of those just men made perfect in resurrection bodies, and we, the Church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; yet so distinctly two separate companies, that God Himself is mentioned as in between them (Heb. xii. 23).

Then, lastly, we read of Joseph's own death, which

took place about fifty-four years after Jacob's, and a hundred and forty-four years before the Exodus. It would appear as if, even in the declining years of Joseph's own life, things had begun to look blacker for Israel; for viceroy though he was, and withal such a friend to Egypt and to its monarch as he had been, he dared not to prefer the same request as to interment in Canaan that Jacob had asked. Not that this matter was immaterial to him. On the contrary, on his death-bed he spoke of the time of Israel's departure, and gave commandment concerning his bones. And these things he did in faith. He, too, had his heart elsewhere; he, too, could trust in God; and he, too, looked forward to resurrection (Heb. xi. 22). And we find that his directions were remembered, and in due time carried out. For thus we read: "And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you" (Exod. xiii. 19). And presently, with all proper care, these were interred in Canaan. "The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought up out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem, for a hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph" (Josh. xxiv. 32). In the New Testament the antitype of this carrying about of Joseph's bones is alluded to (see 2 Cor. iv. 10). "Bearing about always in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." By dying, we live. We remember that Jesus our Lord died. Thus are we delivered from this present evil world without us, and from the flesh which is within us. And thus are we free to live even

here the very life of Jesus, Son of God. And now, Lord, what is OUR hope? We are Thy children, Thy sons, Thy Bride, Thy Church. The earnest of the inheritance we have. What wait we for? Truly our hope is even in Thee. Amen, come, Lord Jesus, come!

Concluding Remarks.

AND thus, as immediately subsequent to the narrative of the six days' Creation work of God, we have the picture placed before us of that Creation blessed and man its appointed ruler under God; so, notwithstanding the anarchy introduced by man's own rebellion and disobedience, yet at the close of the book, we again behold the rule, and in human hands too, restored. Hence, Joseph resembles, to some extent, Him who is the last Adam; wherefore this book of Scripture proves to be, in a peculiar sense, complete in itself. The divine plan, which seemed to have been frustrated and set aside when sin had paralysed Adam's grasp of the sceptre entrusted to him, is yet found to be carried out, in the type, in its various details and ramifications. There is the man that had been tried and had remained firm, and had suffered unto prison three years in consequence, at length brought out and seated on the vice-regal throne of the world; and that world blessed and sustained by him. The view which we get of this seventh man, illustrates in no faint manner, the grand prophetic truth that God's kingdom and rule will be, and in the very time appointed by God, finally set up, all opposition being for ever quelled by that Man whom He hath ordained.

Then further, the other representative men in between Adam and Joseph are seen, when once the two ends of this book are compared together, to appear each in his

due and proper place in the divine panorama. For the rule of the Lord Jesus will comprehend not only all the earth, but also heaven. Throughout both of these spheres will His sway utterly extend, that is to say, it will comprise, not merely the whole area spoken of in Psalm viii.; but according to its vast, its infinite enlargement in the pages of the New Testament, and notably in Ephes. i. 21, 22. The victory in a most complete manner, over all evil, finally and everywhere remains with God. And therefore, the representative men of the two callings of God, at one time as now to heaven and at another to earth, to wit, Enoch and Noah, come next in order after Adam. For sin having entered into the world, it was not enough for Him to cope with that sin, and to suppress it and put it away; but rather, taking occasion from the exposure of creature vanity, He began at once to come forth in rich displays of Himself and of His eternal counsels to head up all as well in heaven above, as in the earth beneath, under the one supreme dominion of His Son, Christ Jesus our Lord (Eph. i. 10).

Accordingly, next in order we have brought before us His dealings with Abraham, who is the father of the two seeds: of the one that is to be like the sand of the seashore; and the other as the stars of heaven in multitude. Of these, believing Abraham is the one father. For inasmuch as it is the part of God to give; so it is the wisdom and the salvation of men to receive His gift. God provides a ransom and finds a Redeemer; and the corresponding action of His saints all, whether those for heaven or those for earth, is to take, is to believe. Further, as it is necessary that the man of faith should be trained and led on from step to step, in the way of trust in God and of implicit obedience unto Him; so the various spiritual vicissitudes in Abraham's life

are traced for us by the Spirit of God, that we, by unquestioning faith and obedience, may grow up in the knowledge of God and of His ways.

Then in Isaac and Jacob we have seen represented to us, also in type, the Son and the Servant. I need not here repeat what, when considering the lives of these two, I have sought to trace, as regards the times and occasions wherein they rather resemble Him, the divine Son and Servant, and where, in other respects, we, as the sons and servants of God, will do well to study His ways with these patriarchs. But Isaac, as the son offered up by his father, and offering up himself also on the altar, and as if dead three days, and then as risen, and in the father's house, is certainly the type of Him who yonder awaits a mystic bride, or people, to be brought to Him from a strange land, whilst yet He continues hidden. But, on the other hand, Jacob represents Him who Himself came forth into that strange land, in order that He might, by laborious service, painfully earn that bride. No wonder that the Servant, being in this type regarded as present down here, the people to be blessed here in this world are also themselves seen to have a certain nearness to Him, as well as that other people far more dearly loved; or, in other words, that the brides of Jacob should be two, and not one only. And thus we come to apprehend that the typical prophecy of this book gradually expands before us as the purpose of God is progressively unfolded, even as similarly the prospect stretched out before the traveller opens out as he advances. When yet he has hardly begun his journey, the mountains appear together, and seem almost to touch each other; but as he advances, the mountains divide, and the valleys lying between them become visible.

Wherefore, lastly, in the account of His way with

Joseph, these two peoples appear to be distinctly sorted, and the one is evidently nearer far to the ruler than is the other. The one, though of Egyptian extraction, is beheld seated upon the throne with Him; whilst those of the inferior calling, though nearer to Him after the flesh, are beheld bending at His feet. They are provoked to jealousy as they perceive that, during their long-continued rejection of Him, not only has His worthiness been acknowledged in another region altogether to that in which they lived, and by a Potentate whose will is supreme, but that a bride has been given unto Him. And thus is He consoled for the temporary loss of His kindred. So much, indeed, does the glory of the celestial transcend and eclipse the glory of the terrestrial, that the former, notwithstanding the preceding instructive type of Jacob's two wives, is here in the account of Joseph's joy so placed, that it might be evident to us that those now clinging to the Lord Jesus, and rejoicing His heart during the period of His rejection on the earth, shall yet have their own peculiar and pre-eminent place in His affections and in His glory, Whose hand, pierced by His brethren, shall yet wield the sceptre of the entire universe.* *We* know some-

* A somewhat similar picture is presented to us in the grouping of Exod. xviii. For there we see Zipporah, who had first met Moses at a well's mouth, and who, during the time that his brethren rejected him, had been given to him by the father to be his bride, and who had identified herself with his lot. And here she is welcomed into Moses' own tent, whilst his brethren, whom he has delivered, are encamped round about. Whilst he had been previously engaged in executing the judgments of God upon Egypt, she had remained hidden in the father's house. But now at length she is publicly brought forth by the father, and owned by Moses before his brethren, as one nearer to himself than they. And the Church will be in heaven ere the Lord begins to deliver His ancient people

thing of His real preciousness, as seen in the light of God's throne. *We* are learning to reckon everything in heaven and earth, according to its reflection of the glory of our Lord. So are we becoming heavenly-minded ourselves; and so shall we be, to the praise of His glory, who, before that glory is openly displayed, hope in Christ (Eph. i. 12, Greek). In the very first verse of this first chapter of this book of Genesis, heaven had been carefully distinguished from the earth; and here, at the close of this book, in the type of Joseph on the throne, we may behold the relative positions of the two peoples for these two realms.*

To be seated with Christ upon His throne is the wonderful view held out before those who now, in an evil day, abide in Him, and overcome the world (Rev. iii. 21). This soul-ravishing word of the Lord's is evidently designed by Him to be the climax† of those seven promises found in the epistles to the Churches of Rev. ii. and iii. Only let it not pass unobserved that whereas Asenath in

Israel, and to pour out His fury upon the world through the action of the seals, trumpets, and vials. And then, ultimately appearing unto them who pierced Him, so that for sorrow they wail before Him, these shall recognize the Church more beloved than they, and in the same glory with Himself.

* I do not think it necessary here at length to trace the difference, fundamental though it be, between the Church and every other class of saints whatever, not excepting others called with a heavenly calling, as Heb. xi. informs us those in patriarchal times were. For we, who now believe on Christ through His apostles' word, over and above being thus called, are also baptized into one body by the Holy Ghost sent down from the glorified Lord Jesus yonder. The bride of the last Adam is being taken during the night of this dispensation from His pierced side, whilst as to this world He appears to sleep, accepting His rejection for a while.

† See proof of this statement in Lectures on the Revelation, vol. i., pp. 53—55.

the type shares all the ruler's own glory with himself, yet never once is she seen to the front in the narrative. Whilst his affections she possesses, and his exalted position she shares, yet does the ruler himself alone fill the entire scene. She is *identified* with Joseph, yet is she not *identical*. One is the blesser; all the others are the blessed. Christ is the Fountain; His people all are vessels. Some, indeed, may be full to overflowing; but what have they which they have not received? That grave error which denies the Church to be Christ's bride, and admits her to be His body only, has arisen through he attempt to bring down and to scan divine realities by human shadows.

Contrary to the opinion of many upon these very high and sacred matters, I own myself to be compelled by what appears to be the distinct leading of Scripture in Ephesians, to accept the view that the position of the Church as the Bride of Christ is higher than is her position as the body of Christ; and that we are members of His body, being taken out of His flesh and out of His bones* in order to be formed into His Bride, as was Eve for Adam. For I beg the reader carefully to observe how the argument of Ephesians, and particularly this line of things, are there unfolded step by step by the inspired writer. In chap. i., he treats of God's predestination and calling of us individually to be His sons, before Him and in His love. Next in chap. ii. we are, taught that we are being builded together for God's

* Eph. v. 30, has the word "out" in Greek before the mention of His flesh, and again it is inserted ere we read of His bones. And thus it is seen, that the sentiment in the first clause is by no means the same as in the latter two. The first clause refers to our oneness with Himself as His body; the other two look at our relationship to Him as His Bride formed out of Him.

habitation, so that we grow into a holy temple in the Lord. Then in chap. iii., we hear that we are all being formed into a body together, of which Christ Himself is the Head. And lastly, in chap. v., we hear of the great mystery of "Christ, AND the Church," so treated of, as in evident allusion to the narrative in Gen. ii.; in other words, of the Church as the Bride of Christ. And it is very remarkable, that of the four similitudes of the Church as such which are found in Scripture—to-wit, a Temple, a Body, a Bride, and a City — each one of the three first of these, which refer to her position Godwards, as a temple or living house for the living God; as a body for the Spirit to fill, flowing down from the Head to all the members; and as a bride for Christ to love, are all found in this single epistle and in this particular order too, as if thus in the comparison of her to a bride, the grand idea of God and her own climax of blessing were indeed reached. If you inquire how can these things be? I can only reply, such seems to be the teaching of Scripture. But may there not be in keeping this best and grandest similitude to the last, the suggestion of the Church's own self-consciousness, of her own Entity. If she were the body only, how could there be any intelligence of His love; any appreciation of Himself? or how could there be any voluntary and hearty reciprocation of that love? And yet surely it is a pleasure to Him, that His love is by us reciprocated!

That it is indeed the bridal relationship of the Church to Christ which is contemplated in Eph. v. 25—32, is evident from many considerations. I will specify three of these: First, the allusion, all through the passage, to the formation and presentation by God of Eve to Adam; only as all antitypical views of Christ transcend vastly he type, so here we have the striking and grand differ

ence, that we, as the Church, are not only formed out of the side of Christ, the last Adam, but by Himself are presented to Himself, the Son of God. Secondly, the sentiment of presenting one's own body to oneself is derogatory to the correctness of Scripture simile and style. And once more, as I have argued on chap. ii., the very language itself—"Christ AND the Church" —ought to settle the matter. For when the thought is of the Church, as the body of Christ, then the Spirit of God speaks of the whole together as "the Christ" (1 Cor. xii. 12, Greek). Hence it seems a very solemn thing to deny this bridal relationship of the Church, inasmuch as this line of thought is here, in this said chapter, carefully traced out at length by the inspired writer, in proof of the reality and greatness of Christ's love. And here, therefore, we have an instance that in clinging to any one side of Scripture truth unduly, which is done when occasion is taken thereby to disparage and to deny any other side of that same truth, we may be led into heresy, which means *selected truth*, and much further on from the full truth of God than one is aware of.

And now, as the morning must soon dawn, and the Morning Star at last appear above the horizon, therefore the true Church of God is awaking up, as Eve, to the blessed consciousness of her own corporate existence, and of His love as her heavenly Bridegroom, and of the glory awaiting her when He comes. So, too, now, in an unprecedented manner, and in hundreds of places in this and other lands, is this loved Church beginning to own and to act on the attraction found in the one Name, and to be assembled solely unto it as the true Church ground, according to Matthew xviii., and by that very action separating herself, as His mystic body

and bride, from all defilement, and from the dead religious souls all around her, unto Him who Himself is also raised from the dead ones by the glory of the Father. Christ's own body was raised up in two literal days; the mystic body of Christ will likewise be raised up in two prophetic days. And then, on the third day, the antitypical marriage will take place in Cana, "possession"; ere He presently *comes down* to Capernaum, "the place of repentance," for Israel. Even now, in many of these true assemblies of His people, the cry is beginning to be heard: not her own cry, as of the Bride only, but of the Spirit Himself within her; yea, conjointly, "the Spirit and the Bride say, Come."* Wherefore, as of old, creation was εξ αυτου, and δι αυτου, and εις αυτον, = "out of Him, and by Him, and for Him" (Rom. xi. 36; Col. i. 16); so in redemption, the like will be seen again, only in a more stable way, as depending on the worthiness and goodness of Him, instead of on its own. For if you look at heaven, there will be seen the Church, His Body and His Bride *there*; or if you look down on earth, yonder is Israel, His Body and His Bride *there* (see Isa. xxvi. 19, and Ps. xlv.). Only

* See my Lectures on Revelation (vol. ii., pp. 276—281), where it is shown that this cry of hers, "Come; come, Lord Jesus!" is in response to the Lord's presentation of Himself as the Morning Star, and, therefore, most certainly is the cry of the Church, as the Bride. For Christ, as the Morning Star, is the Church's hope; as the appearance of Him, as the Sun of Righteousness, is Israel's. As for the false Church, she is everywhere settled down here, and does not want Him. She is Babylon the great, the mother of harlots. Since the Church is both a city and a woman, so also is the counterfeit. But the one is a great city, which the Church is not called (the word "great," in Rev. xxi. 10, should be omitted). Contrastedly, she is "the holy city." And again, the one is a harlot; but the other is a chaste virgin

as the glories of these two peoples are very diverse, so upon His throne, seated with Him, is the one class, with crowns all; whilst standing before Him, but with palms only, is beheld obviously quite another (Rev. vii.). Whilst in Himself, the man-God, the God-man, "the Shepherd and Stone of Israel" (Gen. xlix. 24), is the rule over all, gathered up, and the world itself is blessed at last.

Finally, as God will yet head up all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him, so it would appear that "God has centred in His Son all the blessing that man has abused in all dispensations. In Rev. iv. and v. we find the Lordship of the Adamic dispensation; the Rainbow of the judged and cleansed earth; the glory of Israel that Ezekiel had seen removed from Jerusalem, and the title to Church blessing in the admitted worthiness of the only worthy One."

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